

PUNCH

Vol. CCXXXIV No. 6146 JUNE 4 1958

ARTICLES

- V. S. NAIPAUL
Seven Ages of Humour: Young Men Forget ... 734
- SIRIOL HUGH-JONES
Call it Only Pretty Fanny's Way 737
- P. G. WODEHOUSE
America Day by Day ... 738
- R. G. G. PRICE
Fiscal Loyalties ... 740
- E. M. MITCHELL
Rats and Reactions ... 742
- BERNARD HOLLOWOOD with
R. C. SHERRIFFS
The New Zealanders ... 744-5

FICTION

- DAVID DAICHES
Mr. Gotohed and the School-teacher ... 746
- H. F. ELLIS
A. J. Wentworth, B.A. (Retd.) ... 760

VERSE

- E. S. TURNER
Memo to Hollywood ... 741

FEATURES

- PUNCH DIARY ... 732
- LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ... 750
- IN THE CITY
Lombard Lane ... 751
- IN THE COUNTRY
Ronald Duncan ... 751
- FOR WOMEN ... 752-3
- TOBY COMPETITIONS... 754

CRITICISM

- BOOKING OFFICE
Anthony Powell: "Anger's self I needs must kiss" ... 755
- THEATRE (J. B. Boothroyd) ... 757
- FILMS (Richard Mallett) ... 758
- RADIO (Henry Turton) ... 759



A NEW inquiry into the possibilities of changing over to the metric system was announced last week, and will be conducted by Sir Hugh Beaver and a distinguished panel of industrialists, financiers and economists. Many witnesses are expected to take the opportunity of pointing out that the system is something that works even in France.

A DISPATCH from Washington reports that two health research men in Seattle have discovered that fat tissues promote fat tissues, and that consequently the only way to lose weight is to lose weight. Plump sceptics are ringing up asking if it's a fact that this is a fact.

"Mr. J. R. Spicer, of Vine Cottage, has cashed in on his personal experiences in Queensland by writing a first novel . . . The characters are almost human, and one of them is obviously drawn from his own self."—*Kentish Gazette*

Usual local paper fulsome-ness.

THIRTY-FIVE Moslem students, says a dispatch from Singapore, have gone



on strike "for an English education." As though they needed one.

U.S. SENATORS read with mixed feelings that a TV quiz contestant had raised her winnings to a total of £77,000 by correctly telling the quizmaster the salary of U.S. Senators (£8,000).

CONFUSION in the British mind about French politics has been further

intensified by press insistence that Pffimlin is French for Plum and by reports of M. Pffimlin's warning of a possibility of civil war. One or two careless readers think that the latest government has been formed by Plum Warner.

OBVIOUSLY hard-pressed for a new slant on the well-worn topic of obscene literature, an American psychological team reports that "delinquent behaviour



is actually lessened by bad reading." A still newer slant, due any time now, will be to place juvenile crime statistics in this country squarely at the door of Miss Enid Blyton.

LAST WEEK an aircraft from 893 Squadron made the ten thousandth deck-landing on the *Ark Royal*. The ship's doctor reports that, for a company whose hearts have missed ten thousand beats, all are gratifyingly fit and well.

BRITISH housewives, scanning the news of the bus strike, rail cuts, H-tests, de Gaulle, the weather, Corsica, Tunisia, the Lebanon, polio, inflation, Makarios, Mintoff and the cost of living, received with interest an American cosmetician's assurance that 1958's beauty look is "the laughing mouth."

To Marianne

We love you dearly, Mademoiselle,
Infatuating wench,
We only wonder why the hell
You *have* to be so French.

BB

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Punch Diary

GENERAL DE GAULLE's only possible reply to President Eisenhower's "I liked General de Gaulle" is "I liked Ike." The President's use of the past tense need not of course be interpreted as an obituary device, but it does to some extent weaken the compliment. But my source of reference, *The Times*, may not be strictly accurate in reporting Ike's "disarming remark." A check on other dailies reveals that the *Express*, *Mirror*, *Chronicle*, *Telegraph* and *Worker* reporters or agents all heard the President say "I like de Gaulle." The *Mail* heard with the ear of *The Times*, and the *Manchester Guardian* missed out altogether. There is a lesson here for someone. Americans should pronounce their final consonants—just as they make stuffy Limeys do in their films.

Not the Strike Next Door

HOW difficult it is to be right in the right way. In France the Force Ouvrière and the Christian Unions disregarded a strike call from the Communist-led *Confédération Générale du Travail* but agreed to demonstrate on another day, although the strike that operates in instalments is obviously less likely to put a lock on the economy than one that goes off all at once. The trouble is that it is hard to drive home to an already exasperated public that you are motivated in your non-motion by a philosophy of life that differs radically from the philosophy of the man who is not working next door. The same sort of difficulty occurs with riots. "A bas" sounds much the same whoever is the destined successor to the vacant pedestal; nor is it easy when behaving

excitedly in an open space to show that you reject the hospitality of the organization that provides the banners, the loud-speaker van and the chalked slogans.

Gracious Speech

MR. SELWYN LLOYD's opening words at a Conservative fête on Whit Monday warmed the hearts of all public men, whether permanently public, as politicians are, or only intermittently—as in the after-dinner speech. "I can conceive other ways . . . to spend . . . Whit Monday afternoon," said the Foreign Secretary. "Nevertheless I suppose I must say I am very pleased to be here." Does this at last emancipate the fête-opener, the foundation-stone-layer, the guest of honour at the Bowls Club supper, from the tyranny of meaningless civility? Is there any longer the necessity to say we are pleased to be there when everyone knows already that we would pay good money to be practically anywhere else? Mr. Selwyn Lloyd's lead must be followed quickly, before it is lost sight of, and particularly at his own rarefied level. Recent Ministerial speeches have begun: "It is a privilege to be invited . . ." (Mr. Erroll), "I am very glad to be back with this Council . . ." (Mr. Heathcoat Amory), "I am very grateful indeed to you for the wonderful welcome . . ." (Mr. Harold Macmillan),

and, "I am very happy to be your guest this evening . . ." (Lord Hailsham). How soon are these gentlemen, and others, going to make a fighting speech beginning "This is a bore, Mr. Chairman, and so are you"? If nothing else, it would make us feel free to say just what we think about them.

Folly as it Flies

THE golden age of hoaxers seemed to have passed; perhaps we are due for a renaissance, heralded by the man who bamboozled the little Bedfordshire town of Biggleswade with a synthetic flying saucer cooked up in his garden shed—a rod under the disc revolving by clockwork, an electrically ignited firework rocket and a meteorological balloon, all attached to his belt by a nylon thread. We shall not see many more bogus Sultans of Zanzibar inspecting fleets or false Shahs of Persia in opera boxes or gilded youths digging up Piccadilly, complete with kipper-frying brazier; progress marches on in the world of jesters, who are now likely to concentrate on bits of intercontinental ballistic missiles "found" in Epping Forest glades or radioactive fall-out clouds sprayed over Southend beach. The day of custard pie in the sky is dawning.

Is this Cricket?

THE pools promoters, I see, have turned their attention to cricket. In the Treble Chance, cricket version, you back batsmen rather than teams: one point for nought to nine (counting both innings together), one and a half for ten to thirty-nine, two for forty to sixty-nine and three for seventy and over.

The promoters' reason for this switch is said to be the British punter's lack of interest in Australian football matches—which, I am told, have roughly the status of games between British provincial works' second XIs. Personally I don't believe the British punter cares a hoot about what he is gambling on, provided he can see the result in the evening paper. If cricket pools are a success, we shall have racing pools (three points for first, two for second, one and a half for third, and one for no place at all), and at the appropriate seasons tennis pools, chess pools, athletics pools, boxing pools, and of course swimming pools.



"Well, now—Chicken Makarios or Tournedos Dr. Fisher?"

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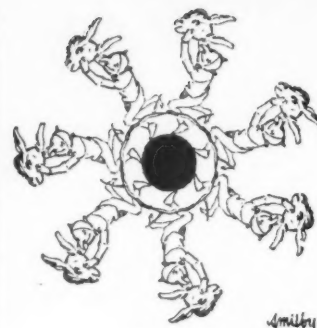
MARIAGE DE CONVENANCE



In the Twenties
V. S. NAIPAUL
says:

Seven Ages of Humour

YOUNG MEN FORGET



I CAN hardly remember my home life until I was fourteen years and three months old. For a writer still in his twenties this is something of a disadvantage. The things I remember are books and school. From about the age of eight my school life was steady and I can measure the progress of the war by happenings at school—the savage beatings of May and September, 1940, and again of July and December, 1941. But although I went home every day I cannot say what happened outside the school gates. I have every reason for believing that my childhood was unhappy. But what can a writer do with an unhappy childhood he doesn't remember?

It is a relief that unhappy childhoods are out these days. Happy childhoods are the thing. Even so I lose. A year or so ago a poet published a book about his experiences as a happy boy of five. He described, among other things, having tea at the home of a poorer boy and distinctly remembering "the taste of the missing butter." The phrase was applauded in *The Times Literary Supplement*. Deprived of childhood's clear perceptions, I am liable to misinterpret any writer who talks about "the taste of the missing butter." It makes me think of a schoolboy detective story.

In compensation I have ridiculously clear memories of babyhood. I am told this is rare. I find it useless. I cannot see how, with the liveliest imagination, I can spin out my adventures as a baby to seventy thousand words.

So the richest part of my short life has been forgotten. The rest has been unadventurous. I have hardly moved outside my family, or needed to. For this family wasn't like the scrubby growths I see around me in Muswell Hill—two adults and two children—but one of those restlessly expanding

Hindu conglomerations. I am on intimate terms with forty-two cousins and about two dozen aunts and uncles. I know where to go if I want to drink whisky, if I want to drink rum, or if I want to hear it proved again that Plato and Aristotle and Pythagoras and everybody else took their ideas from the Hindus. Without having to meet a stranger I became acquainted with a variety of intellects, temperaments and professions. I know a moron or two, a number of vagrants and casual labourers, three full-time pundits, four lawyers, two doctors, two dentists, two politicians, six taxi-drivers (some of them part-time pundits), a few businessmen, any number of "students," and a warden at the Port of Spain lunatic asylum, known more directly over there as the Mad House. I am also related to a mosquito-killer.*

With such large forces at one's disposal family politics are almost a career.

* * * * *

It is the fashion these days to bring out "little reviews" devoted to the problems rather than the productions of the young writer. Latterly there has been a tendency to consider the problems of the young critic as well. It is high time *Punch* devoted some space to the problems of the young humorous writer. It is unusual for anyone but his publisher to take him seriously. If he is lucky he will of course have *The Times Literary Supplement* talking romantically about the sadness of the clown and the tears behind the laughter. But in the meantime, reading all but the most perceptive reviews, I get the impression that I have written my novels with

unsuppressed mirth on the backs of envelopes during a long rush-hour journey on the Underground. I have been accused of writing about the farcical adventures of Trinidadian eccentrics. This is wounding, and unjust.

Come with me on a brief tour of Port of Spain. We will start in Marine Square. That big building with the dirty sea-green windows is the Treasury. It is pretty and modern. The original Treasury was burned down in 1933. We leave Marine Square and walk north along Frederick Street, the main shopping centre. There are modern buildings on either side. A few months ago a fire disposed of the remaining old ones. In a square on your left you will observe a big old building that has been burnt out and fenced round with corrugated iron. That is the Town Hall. Let us continue northwards until we come to the Royal Victoria Institute in the War Memorial Square. It is the local museum and we might find some explanation there. Outside the Institute a rustless ship's anchor stands embedded in concrete. A sign says it is Columbus's anchor. Drawing rapid conclusions, we go inside. Among the Carib middens, preserved with despairing piety, there are gowns worn at Government House balls at the turn of the century. That, more or less, is the history of Trinidad: it hardly exists. Spare a thought, then, for the people who are commissioned to create folk-dances and folk-costumes to entertain visiting royalty.

In fact all you have in Trinidad are people of many races thrown together for a comparatively short time on a small island. Their ambition is to make money and be thought modern. Unfortunately they have no standards of modern behaviour, language or house furnishings. So they invent. Take language. Trinidad English is full of French phrases,

*This is no longer true. He is a shy man; when I went back to Trinidad in 1956 it was his mother who told me of his promotion: "Killing rats now."

one of the most common being *à force de*. The proletariat say "A force I was tired, I took a taxi." (Only the proletariat use taxis.) I have heard this refined and modernized to: "Ah! First I was tired. . . ." Jock-strap becomes jerk-strap, clerk clurkist, furniture furnitures. Take now one small aspect of social behaviour: the serving of marshmallows. In England the problem has been settled; variations undoubtedly exist, but they are not important. In Trinidad marshmallow-serving still offers much room for experiment. At one house they are served speared on the antlers of a deer.

This material is too rich. The writer has to reject, simplify, tone down.

* * * * *

Still, I suppose I could have kept my characters off marshmallows and written haunting little colonial tragedies. I tried. It didn't work. The missing childhood, that family, that background—they couldn't be ignored.

I was encouraged in my light-heartedness by an early drift into literature. It became my duty to read short stories and plays from the Caribbean. One thinks of people laughing and doing abandoned folk-dances on palm-fringed beaches; the stories I read showed a

people obsessed with sudden death. A good seventy per cent of the characters died within their allotted two-thousand-word span. They simply dropped dead at the end of the story, or were drowned, pushed off precipitous cliffs, cutlashed, knifed, shot, bludgeoned, run over, hacked by ship's propellers, pursued and eaten by sharks. Anything was a story provided there was a death in it. A story might begin with a happy family sitting down to dinner. They eat; they talk. Suddenly they are dynamited. End.

Wading in this gore three days a week every week for two years I found it increasingly difficult to take a serious view of the human condition. In particular I developed an unconquerable allergy to any drama about the race problem in the Caribbean. There are all degrees of racial and—equally important—religious antagonisms on those sunny islands. Yet people will pick on the crudest, the most worn and the least important: the negro-white relationship. And the only approved treatment is in the American style, something with a nice part for Harry Belafonte or Cy Grant. The depressing result, so false and vulgar, is supposed to remove prejudice. I can think of few

things more likely to inflame it. I would also have thought it embarrassing to the people it was meant to emancipate. But no. Week after week I had to put up with radio dramas on "the problem," in prose, poetic prose (" . . . then I saw thy ebon frame scarred with whip and glinting in tropic noon . . ."), Elizabethan verse, rhyming couplets.

There are three plots. The first is set in London. The suburban girl is at first repelled by the Caribbean negro; then she sees him carrying books about and is captivated by his self-pity and exquisite manners. The time soon comes for the girl to visit her aunt at Carshalton.

AUNT: Another cup? Milk in first. I know. What's this I hear about you being engaged?

GIRL: Oh, that was what I wanted to talk to you about. I am engaged to a negro.

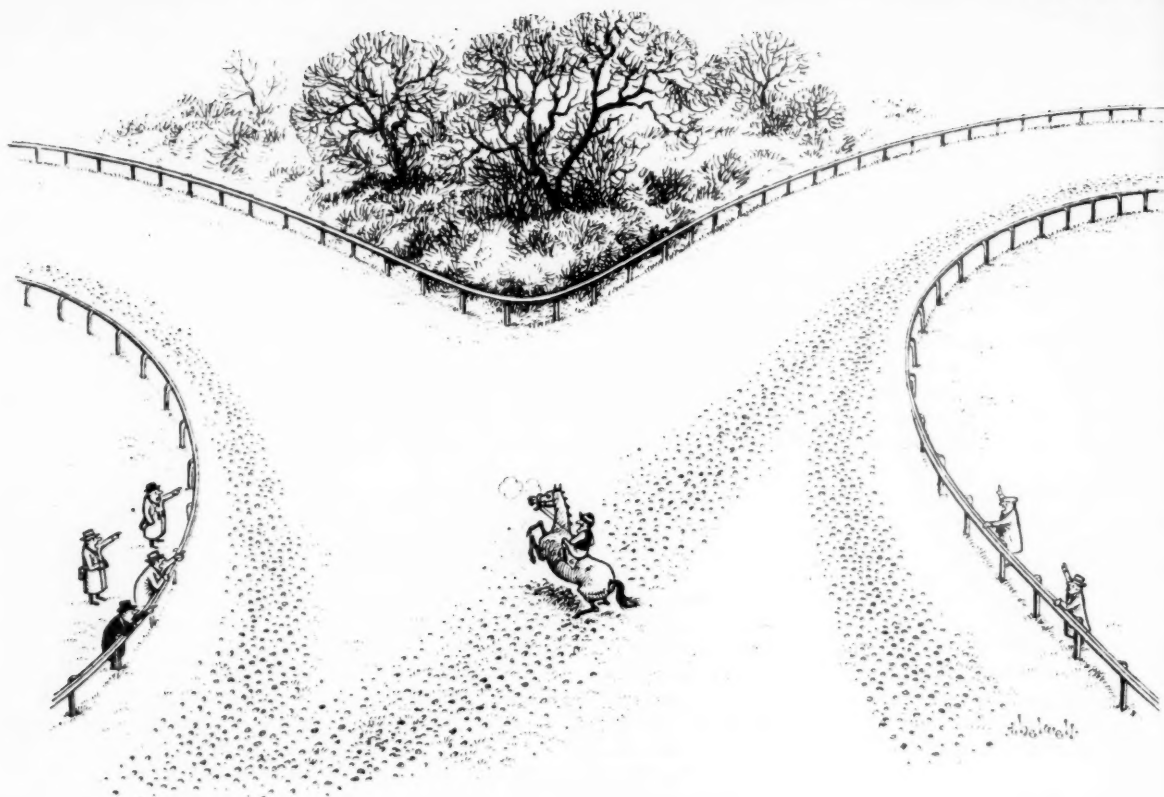
EFFECT: *Dropping of tea-cup*

You can see the rest: tears, suicide, the speech at the end.

The Elizabethan verse drama is set in the Caribbean. The hero is the strike leader, the villain the Police Commissioner, the complication the Commissioner's daughter, Esther. Raiding the union's headquarters the



"Now don't forget—not more than 500 m.p.h. for the first 30 miles."



Commissioner, a pistol in either hand, sees a couple embracing.

COMMISSIONER: Good God! 'Tis true! Alas! Too true!

ESTHER: Hullo, Daddy.

What follows can be recounted briefly: the death of the strike leader, the death of Esther as she tries to shield her lover, the Commissioner's grief, insanity and suicide, the long speech at the end by the progressive Colonial Secretary.

The third type of drama is more pastoral. At a cricket match in Tobago the Englishwoman sees the young negro getting nine wickets before lunch—it would look like propaganda if he got more. The negro opens the innings for his own side and remains firm while the wickets tumble. He makes 210 (run out) and stumps are drawn. That evening at a reception for the cricketers the woman meets the negro. He refuses to talk about the match. He is urged to play something on the piano. He demurs.

WOMAN: Play something—for me.

NEGRO: Oh, very well. But I am out of practice.

(Grams: *Schnabel—Hammerklavier Sonata. Play for three minutes, then hold under*).

WOMAN: How well you play!

NEGRO: Thank you.

Love is born, runs its course, and is only cut short by some minor tragedy—drowning, say.

No, "the problem" has too many devotees; and apart from that analysis of a flourishing branch of Caribbean drama, it would be impertinent for me to add anything.

* * * * *

So I can give no account of harrowing childhood, no mention of "the taste of the missing butter," no strong drama of race. I suppose I am really far too irresponsible. But I don't see how that can be helped. Perhaps it is because I have been too insulated: through no fault of my own I have never—except for ten fatiguing weeks—had to do a ten-to-four job. Perhaps it is because I know the absurdity of my own position too well. I have lived eight years in England. I have never been to India. And there is little now to attract me back to Trinidad. Uncles and aunts have died. Cousins have gone to Canada, America and back to India.

One, imperfectly disguised by a Spanish name, is an illegal immigrant in Venezuela. The latest news from Trinidad is that one uncle has in his old age reverted to violently orthodox Hinduism. I used to hear him singing "When there's a rainbow on the river." Now he is wearing caste marks, cultivating the hairs in his ears and refusing to talk English.

English is the only language I know. I work in an alcove that overlooks a bowling green. The men are in shirt-sleeves. The women wear white jackets and panama hats. Their chatter rises above the clack of the bowls. All around are the flowers of the English spring. I have only recently got to know their names. My senses, numbed for so long by tropical profusion, have begun to react to them.

Other contributors to this series, each representing a different decade, will be:

STEPHEN POTTER
PAUL JENNINGS
P. G. WODEHOUSE
S. L. BENSUSAN

Call it Only Pretty Fanny's Way

CONSIDER for a moment this aghast sentence written by Monsieur Delécluze to Monsieur Ampère, who was at the time a martyr to love for Madame Récamier (the letter is printed in that enchanting book *Two Lovers in Rome*): "Can you, for instance, explain to me why, on the eve of my departure, when I was engaged in quietly talking to Madame Récamier, you stood behind her, kissing and *chewing* her dress like a lunatic?" Sure enough, Delécluze, appalled and very cross, starts his next sentence in the time-honoured way: "Everyone could see you . . ."

Other times, other habits, of course, and sentiment is nowadays so comparatively bridled that practically no one, even in the grip of frustrated passion, would get down to munching up a trapeze-line hem when out for an evening's cultured chat. All the same the stern rebuke comes ringing down the years in a tone of voice that never changes much. The way other people carry on always causes consternation and dismay in others. There I was, just trying, quite calmly and peacefully trying to explain what I felt about unilateral renunciation when I suddenly caught sight of you pulling those faces, hand-jiving, juggling with the soup-spoons, waving your feet in the air in that extraordinary manner, whistling through your teeth, talking to yourself, laughing so much too loudly at that very bad joke you made. Oh the grief and shame of it all . . .

Madame Récamier, a cool customer and one of nature's cut-glass hostesses, was never disconcerted by any little social contretemps, but merely smiled indulgently at the dress-chewer and went right on discussing literature and travel. Maybe only a perfectionist and practised Salon-star, someone who could nicely judge the negligent artistry of a blue scarf lying across the bed in which she so frequently sat to receive guests, could be capable of such excellent sang-froid. Most of us would have been hopping mad in no time and muttering "Goodness me, whatever next," and "No good will come of this. I can tell you."

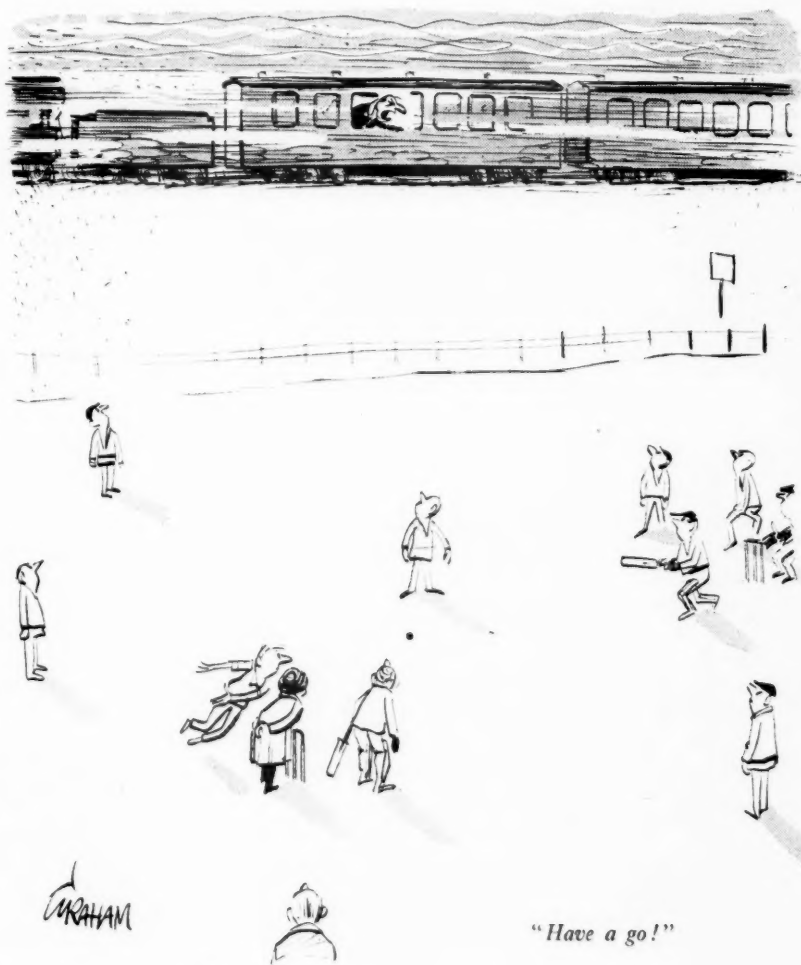
It's not the real, genuine, poetic eccentrics who cause irritation and

By SIRIOL HUGH-JONES

gloom. In England you could walk around with a lobster on a leash, provided it was all right with the R.S.P.C.A. and command nothing but affectionate respect. (Carrying goldfish about in small bowls, on the other hand, and thus making them feel sea-sick, would be regarded as a shabby action unworthy of a gentleman.) I am told there is a bird-lover in Kensington Gardens who wears crumbs on the top of his hat; and what, when you pause to give it a moment's thought, could be more sensible than that?

It is only other people's little ways and fancies that annoy. The young, outraged by the old and their habit of

incessantly standing on their heads, keep asking if at their age they think it is right; and the old retaliate by reckoning very little to activity with washboards and not comprehending Rebels of Rock. I myself feel unreasonably cool towards people who settle down to a three-course meal in the centre stalls just at the beginning of the Big Picture, and ladies who take moody four-footed pals into hairdressers', where their enormous feet spill from their owners' laps into yours, or where they lie, like vast, terrible rugs, all over your ankles, sighing heavily and hating you out of the corners of their morose eyes. I am also unloving towards telephone operators who trap me into admitting my number is what it is, state briskly that



"Have a go!"

they have one clear call for me (early in their careers they take a terrible oath never to reveal a caller's name) and then depart to lead the rich full operator's life elsewhere, leaving me hooked to a sphinx-silent telephone. But no doubt all these habits are just the little ways of other people and I should practise really *deep* tolerance for ten minutes daily in front of an open window.

There is, of course, the other school of thought, now somewhat in the ascendant, that believes what the English need to give is more expression to their feelings, crying "Preposterous balderdash!" and "Off with his head!" in

places of entertainment and chewing up many more hems, no matter who is looking. When Lady Lewisham feels appalled by the sight of other people's naked hot-water bottles she comes right out and says so, and a very fine *pro bono publico* thing too, I'm sure. Getting your feelings about the other fellow off your chest is without a doubt an honest and therapeutic process (though sometimes, I shouldn't wonder, dispiriting for him). If Lady Macbeth, the prototype of the uncrackable hostess, hadn't put up such a good show at the dinner-party where everything went wrong and Macbeth started making

faces, she would perhaps never have run mad in her nightgown later on.

All the same, I doubt whether things will ever change very much. The world will remain more or less divided between the catalysts for disapproval—Shelley whizzing nudely through stunned tea-parties, Caroline Lamb snipping her wrists at the mere thought of Byron, poor Ampère nibbling away regardless—and the sorely tried proper persons who feel they will never be able to lift their heads in society again.

And what makes it absolutely unforgivable is that everybody, but *everybody*, was looking . . .

America Day by Day

P. G. WODEHOUSE reports from New York

AUSTERE theatregoers who hold that musical comedy should be a grim and smileless thing, purging the soul with pity and terror, received a shock the other day when a tuneless trifle called *Say, Darling*, without a single death scene in it, opened at the Anta on Fifty-Second Street and not only opened but stayed open and is playing to capacity nightly. Being the hero of a modern musical has come to be ranked as one of the dangerous trades, but the principal character in this one gets through to the final curtain without so much as a flesh wound. How different

from the home life of the juvenile lead in such a divertissement as *West Side Story*. It is a revolutionary departure but one which, however disappointing to the undertakers in the audience, has the support of the general public.

Say, Darling, is by Richard Bissell, who wrote the novel which was made into the musical *The Pajama Game*. He then wrote a novel describing his experiences as a novelist whose novel is made into a musical, and this novel has been made into the musical *Say, Darling*. He is reported to be working now on a novel about a novelist who has

his novel made into a musical and writes a novel about a novelist who has his novel made into a musical, and where it will all end, knows God, as *Time* would say. I am watching the situation very closely.

Now that the baseball season has begun—in the usual sub-zero temperatures and heavy rainstorms accompanied by strong winds from the north-east—everyone is speculating as to what the harvest will be with the New York Giants migrating to San Francisco and the Brooklyn Dodgers to Los Angeles. It is as though Surrey and Middlesex had suddenly decided to shift their popping creases to Glasgow and Edinburgh; and we are all wondering how the fans are going to take it, particularly in Brooklyn, where civic pride is always at berling pernt. The general feeling is they will keep a stiff upper lip and preserve their lertly to the team that is now three thousand miles away. This is borne out by the news in the paper that a local stripteaser has changed her name to Honey Dodger and the story that on what should have been the opening day at Ebbets Field thirty thousand Brooklyn supporters turned up and threw pop bottles at the spot where in happier days the umpire had stood.

The rumour, by the way, that the Dodgers, in order to please their new patrons, will play in dark glasses, parti-coloured silk shirts with monogram over the heart, openwork sandals and green corduroy slacks is, I believe, without foundation.





"You and your quest for Montmartre local colour—this would never have happened if we'd gone to the British Tea-room."

So much for professional baseball. But professional baseball cannot be compared, though well enough in its way, with the amateur game. For real thrills you must go to Concord, Massachusetts. At the penitentiary there the other afternoon a contest was in progress between the home team and a visiting nine, and one of the latter skied one into the deep, some thirty yards from where Ronald Mules (doing a five-year stretch for burglary) was fielding. The excitement was intense. Would Ronald get to it? If he did get to it, would he hold it? He did. He not only ran like a mustang and made the catch, but went on running right out of the ball park and into the woods beyond, and has not been seen since.

He deserves all the more credit for

the feat because he had not really had a great deal of experience at the game. As a youngster he had turned out occasionally for the Lyman Reform School and later had played once or twice on the Norfolk Prison Colony team, but this was his first appearance for a major club. Or disappearance, would it be better to say?

Dieting continues to be all the go on this side of the Atlantic, and the number of those who push their plates away untasted increases daily. But there are still some sturdy souls who enjoy a square meal, notably in Detroit, Michigan. Dr. Joseph Molner, the Health Commissioner of that city, has just published a list of the peculiar things eaten and drunk by the citizens

during his three years of office. It includes insecticides, detergents, laundry bleaches, shoe-polish, gluc, chalk and charcoal, washed down with ink, hair-setting lotion and lighter fluid. I have never actually attended any of these Detroit parties, but the picture I conjure up is of a sort of Dickens Christmas, the detergent bowl circulating freely and the air ringing with merry cries of "Don't spare the shoe-polish, Percy," and "After you with the insecticide, George." And the extraordinary thing is that the revellers seem to thrive on the stuff. The rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes to be seen in Detroit would reach, if placed end to end, for miles and miles and miles.

I was speaking not long ago of the

remarkable improvement in American manners, at one time inclined to be brusque, and eulogizing the new spirit of considerateness which you see on every side nowadays. A striking example of this spirit was given in Milwaukee last month, when Paul Chaney (26) appeared in the District Court, charged with having thrown a large brick through the bedroom window of a girl friend with whom he had had a tiff of some nature. Asked why he had done this, he replied: "I threw the brick through the bedroom window because I didn't want to disturb anyone else in the house."

No doubt he had asked himself what the Chevalier Bayard would have done, and this was it.

Fiscal Loyalties

WHEN I find myself on the verge of admitting that the Income Tax have really treated me quite fairly, family tradition stiffens my tongue. My father was in the Estate Duty Office and brought me up to believe that men who taxed capital were to men who taxed income as the British Navy to the Panama Mercantile Marine. In my childhood I stoutly held that the E.D.O., as its habitués called it, was not merely first among the Departments of the Inland Revenue but first among all Government Departments. The Treasury might seem to have a certain priority, but that was nothing more than

a pull based on proximity to Downing Street.

In those days the office was in Somerset House, a worthy successor to the Royal Academy and the Admiralty. It did not fill all the buildings round Sir William Chambers' great courtyard, only the western side, farthest from the co-eds in King's College and nearest to Waterloo Bridge. Elsewhere in those noble buildings were the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, who were accorded in our family the respect due to scholarly migrants on their way to and from the plums of Whitehall, though the poor fellows were not of course lawyers but well-meaning amateurs, to be judged by how far they left the mysteries of the E.D.O. unmeddled with. Moreover Somerset House contained a kind of reading-room, with the reading matter restricted to wills. Then there was something I never understood, a department that dealt with rather highbrow stamps.

Finally there was the head office of the Income Tax, an organization that actually had *branches* all over the country like a chain-store. I liked to think that when anybody paid money to my father and his intimates they darn well had to do it in London. I also liked to think that when people died, and I knew how often I had to take off my round felt hat to funerals, my father had important work to do. I boasted to little children at parties and, as they rarely knew what death duties were but only what they sounded like, they edged away from me as from the son of a public executioner or ghoul.

Other men's Londons start from the Houses of Parliament or Kensington Gardens or the Mile End Road or King's Cross. Mine radiated out from Somerset House. Visits to the pantomime often started from my father's room so I still have a feeling, not generally shared, that the palladian triple gateway from the Strand is the entrance to a world of enchanted revelry. To the unbiased eye the old E.D.O. probably had a stony, green, distempered, dusty look. The typical noise was the clang of iron. Ex-servicemen, in blue messengers' uniforms with the neat gold crown on the lapel, hauled trolleys filled with enormous



"What I'd like to know is how he learned the secret hand-grip of the Ninth Street Elks Lodge of Peoria, Illinois."

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files bound, as I remember it, in sheepskin and looking as though they were designed to last nine hundred and ninety-nine years.

Furniture was solid and on each desk was a long, cumbersome iron device (which Mumford would call palæo-technic) for making holes in papers before tying them together with red tape, which was coloured pink; but then hunting pink is red. One must allow some free play for tradition. The new recruit on his first day stood and signed a receipt for this machine and for other official issues, while he tried to get the hang of the Manual of Death Duties. In time a chair arrived and by the end of his first morning he was issued with a desk, for which he had to account on his last day in the service. In those remote times Parliament insisted on value for money on the spot and the recruit faced a full day's work on his first day without any such concessions to weaklings as explanation of what the work was about. Promotion was signalized by improvements in accommodation and furnishings culminating in a carpet. One man caused a frightful scandal by buying his own carpet and laying it himself, thus confusing other Civil Servants about his status.

Bustling about the corridors and pausing for chats on topics safe between lifelong acquaintances were a very varied staff. There were dim mechanically cheerful men, high-shouldered singers of Victorian comic songs who had once had a sketch performed at the Tivoli, thick-set para-military men, burly softly-insolent men in good clothes carelessly worn, men conscious of holding equal rank with the Wykehamists in the Treasury, vague bookish men who were conscious rather of equality with the technicians in the British Museum or Public Record Office, rough-haired raw-boned men asserting the rigours of their youth, and a number of grey mice—Strube's Little Man with kind smiles and bad breath. And there were the girls who seemed to find everything a matter of course.

Without any fuss the E.D.O.'s minuscule staff collected nearly a third as much as the Income Tax. Most of these dedicated men chose to stay quietly and securely, performing their skilled tasks with elegance; a few moved on. There was a tale that several became Lloyd George's secretaries and



"So that's what's interfering with the telly."

that when he had exhausted them he parked them, pale and prematurely senile, at the heads of the Whitehall Ministries. He did not, of course, send them back to the E.D.O.; they had been blunted. Alumni have included Lord Stamp, Sir Ernest Gowers and Mr. Justice Donovan. Among the curiosities of the office were an illegitimate son of Napoleon III who passed any hours he spent in his room making tea in a machine or, according to a more detailed story, operating a still. Perhaps it was part of an interdepartmental feud with the Excise. There was the 'nineties poet Theodore Wratislaw, John Betjeman's "Is it really Wratislaw?" (*On Seeing an Old Poet in the Café Royal*). There was a man who valued racehorses for the Customs and persuaded them that in the public interest he ought constantly to attend race-meetings; but he refused to join the Customs, insisting on remaining on the strength of the superior department. There was Freddie Gorle, his pockets stuffed with foreign newspapers, thought to be in touch with Continental socialists who were probably bomb-throwing and certainly bearded, a figure in the history of the Labour Party and the Savage Club. There was a keen amateur conjurer who performed to me on my visits and was said to have taken the hat of a solicitor who had arrived for an interview, made an omelet in it and forgotten how the trick ended.

Long since the Income Tax have won. The E.D.O. has been driven out of the west wing, away from the river and Waterloo Bridge and the water-gate. No longer can meetings be held in a room with a wind-vane showing the prevailing wind at Portsmouth for the information of the Board of Admiralty. They are, according to my *Whitaker*, in West Kensington, but they may well have been moved on again since it was printed. I feel rather as the son of a canon of St. Paul's might feel if the Chapter had been shifted to Ealing to make room for the Salvation Army.

Memo to Hollywood

AH, VistaScope! Ah, ChromoSpan!
Your miracles astound.
Ah, StereoScoCinePan!
What next in sight or sound?

Oh, HiFi sound on Seven Tracks!
Oh, Todd-AO and all!
The picture hasn't any cracks—
It runs right round the hall.

And yet one problem plagues the reels,
One answer stays unfound:
*Our gracious Sovereign's carriage wheels
Still turn the wrong way round.*

E. S. TURNER



"Just a little more to leg."

Rats and Reactions

By E. M. MITCHELL

YOU won't find me getting all worked up and changing my way of life every time a professor in Omsk or some such place announces that he's made an important discovery relating to human behaviour and reactions. The odds are that his findings are based on the results of experiments performed on *rats*, and as far as I'm concerned he's been wasting his time.

I once saw a film illustrating an experiment of this kind, the rats being accustomed to finding their way through a maze to get at food in the middle. When the professor removed some of the partitions and inserted others in new places I must say the results were

impressive. One of the rats actually tried to climb the walls and finally fell back and bit itself sharply in the leg. A typical nervous breakdown, said the commentator.

Coming out of the cinema I got around to thinking about the man I was working for at the time, and it occurred to me that there was nothing I would like better than to see him climbing the walls and biting himself in the leg. We were not on good terms at the moment. All that had happened was that I'd typed a letter to the High Commissioner for Australia, addressing him as "Dear Sis," but he'd been going on like a maniac about it ever since.

Now the remarkable thing about Hibberson was the regularity of his movements at the start of every day, and it seemed reasonable to suppose that if I could bring about sufficient disruption in his pattern of behaviour he should, according to the professor and his rats, go to pieces about 9.30 a.m.

His routine was as follows. He arrived at the office at 8.55, never failing to remark, as he came in at the door, "Five to nine! Never been late in twenty years!" Then he skimmed his hat across the room, where it alighted with unflinching accuracy on the middle peg of the hatstand. This done, he strode across to the partition and leapt up to

see, through the glass part at the top, if the Head Clerk had arrived. Then back to his desk, where, for some reason I had never been able to fathom, he rapidly opened and shut all six drawers, one after the other, barely glancing at the contents. From nine to nine-fifteen he went through his mail and stuck together, using a neat triangle of paste, any letters consisting of more than one page. Pins and paper-clips he regarded as the tools of the sloppy-minded. At nine-twenty he rang for the office boy and put himself into the right mood for the rest of the day by subjecting him to blistering criticism, mostly fully justified, of his appearance, manners and deportment. When this was over Hibberson would rub his hands, light his pipe and commence dictation.

Before I reached home I had a plan fully worked out, and next morning I arrived at work three quarters of an hour early to put it into operation. First I put the clock forward three minutes and turned the hatstand round so that the centre peg was now at an oblique angle—a much more difficult shot. I went round into the next office and hung a large calendar high up on the partition in such a position as to block any possible view of the Head Clerk's desk. I wedged a large ledger at an angle in the second drawer of Hibberson's desk so that it would only open about an inch. Then I went in search of the office boy.

"I want you to do something for me," I said. He looked suspicious. "This morning I want you to be absolutely clean and tidy. When you come in with the orders I want you to stand up straight—but first come in at the door properly—and whatever you do don't lean on the desk, and don't forget to say 'Thank you, sir,'—like this . . ." I demonstrated the swift neat entry, the smart stance, the polite answer. "What for?" said the office boy, who obviously thought I'd gone mad. "I don't want you to give him the chance of telling you off this morning—it upsets me," I explained. "I'll give you half a crown if you can get it right. Can you do it?" "I can for half a crown," he said. We went over it again to make sure he knew his part.

Hibberson came leaping up the stairs at his usual time. "Five to nine! Never been . . ." his voice trailed away. He was staring at the clock incredulously. His hat was already sailing across the room.

It missed the peg and fell to the floor. He picked it up, muttering under his breath about the cleaners. His face was black as thunder as he strode to the partition for his usual jump, but of course he couldn't see anything for the calendar. Next moment he was tugging frantically at the second drawer of his desk. In the end the back tore off the ledger and the drawer came right out, flinging him on his back and scattering books and papers all over the floor. I thought he was going to crack there and then, instead of at nine-thirty, but when we'd picked things up he sat down at his desk and got busy with his paste-pot.

I realized, at this point, that I ought to have watered the paste down or something. I didn't want him calming himself down and ruining my programme, so I was pleased to detect a certain lack of precision in his handling of the brush.

Then he rang for the office boy and sat back, ready to give it to him hot and strong. I hoped this part of the plan wasn't going to go wrong.

I'd under-estimated the boy. He was a smart lad all right if there was anything at the end of it. He gave a perfect performance, leaving Hibberson speechless. "Is there anything else, sir?" he asked politely. "N-no, nothing else," muttered Hibberson.

He sat in silence for a moment, deep in thought, and looking very queer indeed. Then very slowly, gazing straight in front of him, he took out his pipe and rapped it on the edge of the desk. It broke into two pieces. He looked at them sadly and laid them reverently in the wastepaper-basket. He looked as if he might burst into tears.

I wish I could report, at this stage, that he did lay his head down and weep, followed by three weeks in a nursing home, shielded from the outside world, leaving me free to get on with my knitting in the office, but he didn't. He just sat there and I realized he was listening. I heard it too, a muffled roar of laughter from next door.

He got up and went out of the office, and when he'd been gone a minute or two I followed him. He was outside in the corridor, gazing through the open door of the Sales Office, where the office boy—detestable brat—was re-enacting, with gross exaggeration, the part he'd played earlier on, whilst the clerks stood around and guffawed. With fingers cocked daintily he combed his

hair and adjusted his tie with finicky care. Then he minced across the room and presented a batch of imaginary papers with an elaborate flourish. "Was there hanythink helse, sir?" he said. The clerks were in convulsions, especially when he showed them, with bulging eye and dropped jaw, how Hibberson had taken it. When I heard my name and realized he was telling them how I'd put him up to it I thought it was time to get back into the office.

Hibberson came in a few minutes later and his face was grim. "You!" he yelled, "you put him up to it, and I'd like to bet you altered the clock and wedged the drawer!" I thought it wisest to try to laugh it off. "Well, I didn't have anything to do with your pipe breaking," I said. He advanced upon me, and too late I realized his intention. We went once round the desk before he caught me. He was a powerful man and next moment I was across his knee, face downwards, while the room echoed with a series of sharp reports, followed by a burst of demon laughter from the top of the partition, where the clerks next door had taken down the calendar and were standing on chairs to get a better view.

Perhaps this will explain why I consider it unwise to draw any conclusions regarding human behaviour from the results of experiments with rats. It's not only foolish, it's downright dangerous.



"Another thing, do tumbrils have the right of way?"

THE NEW ZEALANDERS

IT is not the fault of J. R. Reid's New Zealanders that the cricket season of 1958 has opened rather dismally. Lord's, with its fine new stand, is as bright and beautiful as ever, but spectators have been discouraged by nippy winds and the bus strike, and the seating accommodation (if we may so describe the rack-like contraptions surrounding the lovely quartic of meadow) has not so far been heavily taxed. Tiers, idle tiers.

It is not the fault of the New Zealanders that cricket in England should suddenly have lost so many of its star turns and that county elevens (look at Yorkshire!) should seem hardly more impressive on paper than the sides posted up every Wednesday night, on Gunn and Moore literature, outside the "Rose and Crown" at Maddingley Green and the "Volunteer" at Whiteheath Beeches.

It is not the New Zealanders' fault that county cricket is still a sluggish six-day bike-ride when what the public wants, and will some day get, is a competition restricted to reasonable hours at week-ends. (Elderly patrons may now stop reading and turn to the pictures.)

Nor, for that matter, is it anybody's fault that already all eyes are on next winter's M.C.C. tour of Australia. England's sweeping successes against

the West Indies, and the Australians' dramatic recovery in South Africa, have brought the colour back into the cheeks of Brisbane, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney and made a winter down under seem the ripest plum that Fleet Street has to offer. It is inevitable that this season's Tests should be considered something of an appetizer for the Australian banquet, and nothing that the New Zealanders can do—such as breaking their duck in Test victories against England (let's hope they do)—will make any difference to the arrangement of the menu. There are lies, dam' lies and *Wisden*, but no cricket-lover can overlook the fact that on their last outing against England, at Auckland, New Zealand were shot out for twenty-six miserable runs, that in twenty-one Tests between 1929 and 1955 New Zealand have failed to beat England, that New Zealand did not win a Test against any country until 1955-56 at the forty-fifth attempt, and they are still very much at the foot of the international table.

On the other hand—statistics being

what they are—only a little ingenuity is needed to make Reid's men seem the toughest of opponents. On their last visit to England in 1949 the New Zealanders did not lose a Test and were undefeated in their games with the counties. Moreover... but these facts need typographical dramatization:

New Zealand has never been beaten in a Test at Lord's.

New Zealand has never been beaten in a Test at Edgbaston.

New Zealand has never been beaten in a Test at Leeds.

NOEL
HARFORD

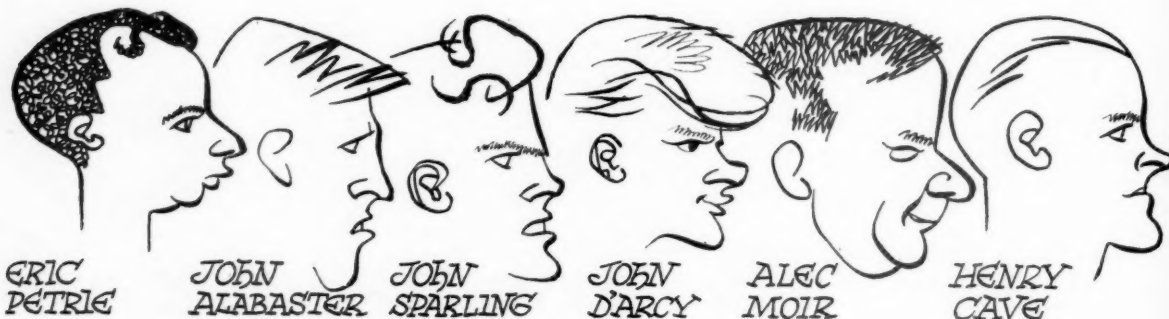


Impressive, eh?

It is not difficult, looking at Manager Phillipps's sun-tanned muscular flock, to imagine every man Jack of this side riding the range and being wholly occupied professionally with such things as lamb, wool, butter and geysers. But surprisingly only one member of the team, vice-captain Cave, is a sheep farmer. The rest are schoolmasters, engineers, clerks, composers, salesmen, lawyers and so on. A cerebral lot on the whole. Reid's team is obviously weaker in batting than Hadlee's team



MR. MANAGER



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SHERIFFS.



JOHN
REID

noisy determination. Groundsmen know when John Reid has played a longish innings by the immense amount of returfing called for in the region of the popping creases. He toured England successfully with Hadlee (1,488 runs) and after three seasons with Heywood in the Central Lancashire League he may be said to be thoroughly conversant with our swamp-and-sawdust techniques. Reid is, to say the least, an all-rounder. He captains militantly, bats brilliantly, bowls either medium pacers or nippy off-spinners, fields superbly (his catching at Worcester



LAWRENCE
MILLER

of 1949, but in Miller, Harford, Meale, Reid, Sutcliffe, D'Arcy, Playle and Sparling there is a wealth of talent, resolve and run-getting ability. Miller has been the most consistently successful bat in New Zealand for several seasons, and I expect him to get as many runs as anyone during this English summer. The fact that he adopts a Yul Brynner hair-do is a source of mild satisfaction to his colleagues, one theory being that the style was adopted in order to avoid debilitating comparison with the other, the Australian Miller, the man who carried a comb in his pocket.

Harford, who got a handsome fifty on his first visit to Lord's, is another hard-driving, get-on-with-it character, while Meale (Trevor) adopts the barndoor defence perfected by Trevor of Essex and England. Sutcliffe we all know as one of the great batsmen of all time.

Captain Reid, from Otago, is the beefiest hunk of cricketer I have ever seen—Maurice Leyland included. He hits ferociously and contrives even in his stance to look hostile and intimidating. As the bowler sets off on his run Reid's bat slaps the block-hole with



BERT
SUTCLIFFE

made one elderly clown with whom I was watching the game mutter "See, is it after fifty-five or sixty overs that they slip a disc out?") and can also keep wicket efficiently.

The New Zealand batting is bright and brittle, and I doubt whether it has either the heart or the head for five-day Tests. The bowling, on the other hand, seems thoroughly attuned to the Marathon engagement. Cave, Blair, Hayes, and MacGibbon make up a first-rate quartet of quickies: they all bowl tightly

and tirelessly. And for spin there are Alabaster and Moir, leg-men of typically erratic skill.

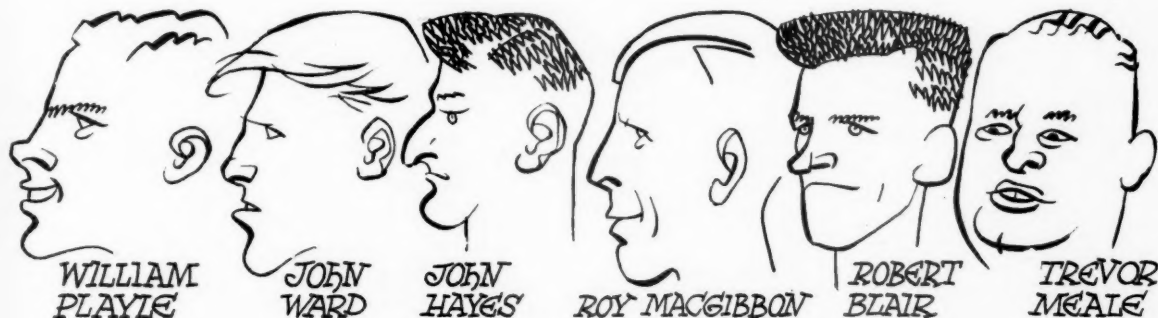
These delightful visitors will surely lose the series, but in doing so they will revive some of the splendour of the summer game, and perhaps they will teach our own cricketers that some of the old sporting conventions are well worth reviving. Already it has been remarked that Reid's ingoing batsmen *always* meet the outcoming batsmen on the field of play, that as fielders they bustle about purposefully between overs, that even their fast bowlers get through a six-ball spell in good time, that as batsmen they are not afraid of walloping long-hops and half-drags at the start of an innings, or of lifting the ball over the heads of mid-off and mid-on.

I told the manager that I hoped his team would win two of the five Tests, and he beamed benevolently from behind his glasses.

"That's very kind of you," he said, "a very nice thing to say."

And I still can't decide whether he considered my remark as generous or insufferably impertinent.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



WILLIAM
PLAYLE

JOHN
WARD

JOHN
HAYES

ROY MACGIBBON

ROBERT
BLAIR

TREVOR
MEALE

Mr. Gotobed and the Schoolteacher

By DAVID DAICHES

MR. THOMAS GOTOBED (the name is a common one in East Anglia) is, like myself, regarded as a stranger in our village, for he arrived here from Newmarket only six years ago. It is perhaps this fact which accounts for the touch of persecution complex which his behaviour exhibits. The village, he feels, does not appreciate him and even goes out of its way to make life hard for him. He has taught this doctrine to his two children, Richard and Gerald, aged five and seven respectively, who, as a result, spend much of their time annoying their neighbours and damaging their property. They have, in fact, set themselves up as the leaders of the destructive

faction among the village children, a faction which not only engages in regular assaults on the local telephone kiosk (which has had its glass broken five times, to be repaired each time by the long-suffering post office telephones department) but also organizes regular teasing of what might be called the genteel element in the village, which consists of the rector's children and ours. The rector, a mild-mannered, scholarly man who finds it hard to establish contact with his parishioners, contents himself with deploring the Gotobed influence in the village, while his wife unnecessarily exhorts her children to

keep away from the Gotobed gang on the irrelevant ground that they "have lice in their hair."

The village schoolmistress, however, has taken more constructive steps to alter the anti-social behaviour of the young Gotobeds and their gang. Mrs. Johnstone her name is, and she is an energetic Scot of about 60, who during the war was the local billeting officer, head of the Women's Voluntary Services, sole teacher in a school swollen with evacuees from London to four times its normal size, and administrator of the Rural Pie Scheme, which provided off-the-ration meat pies for agricultural workers. Mrs. Johnstone realized, from the first day that she had Gerald at school, that what the Gotobed boys needed was some positive direction of their energy. She tried hard to turn their pugnacious instincts into feelings of friendly rivalry and she organized all kinds of competitive games and sports for this purpose. Her psychology was sound, and her methods vigorous, but she met with no conspicuous success until she arranged to have ropes hung from the arms of the stout oak tree which stood in the school playground and encouraged the children to climb these at competitive speeds. She also arranged to give extra credits to any child who intervened in order to prevent her flock of geese from entering and devastating the large communally owned vegetable garden (known simply as "the allotments") which lay between the school playground and her own backyard.

There were repercussions, however, from both these measures. Mr. Gotobed, who had looked with equanimity on his children's destruction of post office property and indeed of anything else they could lay their hands on, decided that it was a shocking thing for children to climb trees, even by means of ropes, and loudly complained that Mrs. Johnstone was endangering his boys' lives. After some weeks of futile complaining he ordered his wife (for some reason, it is always through her that he conveys any instructions to the children) to tell the boys to tell Mrs. Johnstone that they were not to climb the tree. The boys, who thoroughly enjoyed climbing the tree, nevertheless relished the prospect of conveying such

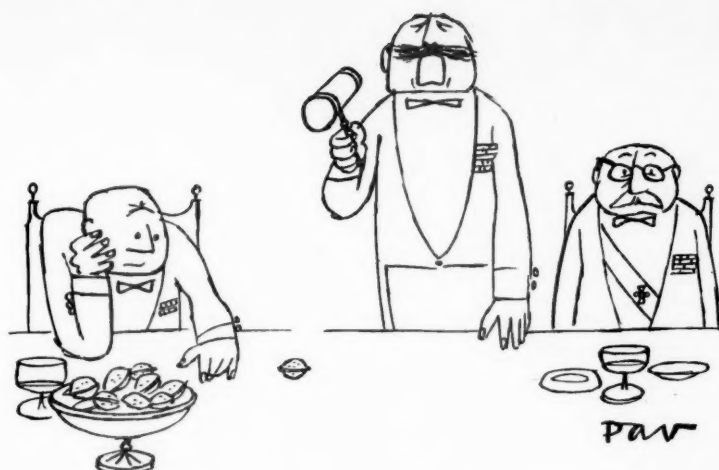


a message, as it represented a challenge from their parents to the teacher and an indication that their parents were the teacher's boss. Mr. Gotobed was also successful in prevailing on a few other parents to prohibit their children from climbing the tree on the grounds of danger to life and limb.

"Please, teacher, my Mum says I'm not to climb the tree," chorused several young voices at the beginning of the lunch hour next day. But Mrs. Johnstone knew how to handle that one. "If your mother says you're not to do it, then of course you mustn't," she said sternly, addressing those who had joined in conveying this parental message. "You just sit down on the grass while the others climb, and be sure you don't go up that tree." She had barely finished the sentence when the whole Gotobed gang were swarming up the ropes, and that was the end of that.

The idea of encouraging the children to be vigilant about the geese, however, proved less successful. The aim was to induce social responsibility, but the very reverse of this was achieved. It did not take long for the children to discover that a cry of "Geese in the allotments" could temporarily disrupt lessons and postpone many an evil moment. Gerald and Richard soon learned how to drive the geese quietly towards the allotments just before the end of the lunch hour, so that they could raise the happy warning cry as soon as afternoon school began. To do Mrs. Johnstone justice it must be said that she soon got wise to this and checked the position of the geese before starting each new lesson, but the failure of her well-meant plan rankled, and she chalked it up among the other scores she had against Mr. Gotobed.

A happier notion was to read the story of the Kon-tiki expedition to the older children: this had the effect of sending all the children in the village, young and old, good or bad, into a fever of constructive workmanship. They constructed a raft of old planks and empty oil-drums and, with the happy approval of Mrs. Johnstone, launched it on the village pond. The pond, though not deep, was dirty, and as sooner or later all the children fell in and got themselves and their clothes into a thoroughly messy state, the Kon-tiki expedition was not popular with the parents, least of all with Mr. Gotobed, who publicly announced in the Blue



Lion one evening that this was a deliberate conspiracy to corrupt and dirty his children. But there is no doubt that the children's energies were canalized, and Mrs. Johnstone was very content.

Mrs. Johnstone next discovered that the greater part of the more destructive activities of the Gotobed gang was done in the long, light summer evenings which seemed to urge children to anti-social behaviour. She had often been disturbed at the late hours to which the children stayed up in the summer time, and severely censured the thoughtlessness of parents who, simply because it was light, allowed their children to stay up until nine-thirty or ten with the result that they arrived at school the next day bad-tempered and slow-witted through lack of sleep. She decided at last—even though she realized that this would be clearly infringing on parental responsibility—to give the children a vigorous pep talk on the importance of going to bed in time and getting sufficient sleep to enable them to grow properly and keep their health and strength. The suggestion that lack of adequate sleep would make a youngster weak and weedy created quite an impression, and when she rode through the village street on her bicycle at eight-thirty that evening she was surprised and pleased to find few of the younger children out and young faces popping out at her from bedroom windows, shouting "Hello, teacher! I'm not in bed yet, teacher." They were at least in their bedrooms, and getting ready for bed. Most of the parents appreciated Mrs. Johnstone's help in getting the children off to bed in time, but some

resented it, and Mr. and Mrs. Gotobed resented it with deep bitterness. "Never you mind, you don't have to do as *she* says," Mrs. Gotobed would shout upstairs to Gerald and Richard when she found them scurrying to their rooms a full hour earlier than had been their custom, but oddly enough the boys liked the idea of looking out at their teacher from their bedroom window and shouting teasing remarks at her, to which she would reply by shouting "Go to bed, Gotobed," to their immense delight. When Mrs. Johnstone at length brought the school bell along with her as she cycled through the village on her evening patrol, and rang it as a curfew, Mr. Gotobed called a meeting in the church hall to protest against this misuse of school property. Only a few parents turned up, and the protest was therefore unimpressive. Mr. Gotobed's bitterness increased, and at the same time it became concentrated more and more against Mrs. Johnstone.

This was the state of affairs by the end of last summer, at which time it is traditional for the annual church fête to be held in the large rectory garden. The fête took place one golden, cloudless afternoon, and almost all the village turned out. There was a real model steam engine, provided by a friend of the rector's, which ran on real rails and gave rides to the children at sixpence a time; there were stalls for the sale of home-made cakes and candy; there was the popular gambling game where you rolled pennies down on to a numbered board in the hope that they would land evenly on a number; there was a dog show and a rabbit show and a



pig to be competed for by trying to bowl six balls into numbered circles. Mrs. Johnstone of course was there, superintending the railway, selling raffle tickets, and doing a dozen other things besides. Mr. and Mrs. Gotobed were there, dressed in their Sunday best, perambulating the various stalls with conscious dignity. Gerald and Richard, who had been scrubbed unusually clean for the occasion, spent most of their time riding on the model railway with sixpences provided by Mrs. Johnstone.

My wife was asked to judge at the dog show, and won an unprecedented smile from Mrs. Gotobed by giving the Gotobed's mongrel dog the prize for the dog with the pleasantest face (a category hastily invented by the rector to replace that of the ugliest dog, which he realized at the last moment was a tactless distinction to make). I mention this only because by some extraordinary

error of the local press my wife's name appeared in the following Friday's county paper among the winning rabbits. Mr. Gotobed kept eyeing Mrs. Johnstone darkly, and refused to return any of the bright smiles she turned on him. He detached himself from his wife at the dog show and started to prowl round the garden in sullen silence. He seemed attracted by the bowling for the pig, however, and the third time round he stopped and watched some of the competitors. "Come on, Gotobed, have a try. Threepence for six bowls. This here valuable young pig, presented by our good friend Farmer Wellaby, is to be won by the one that scores the highest. 21 is the top score so far. You can beat that, Gotobed, you can beat it easy." Gotobed kept his eyes on the pig, on exhibition in a neighbouring enclosure, and at length, muttering "I've always had a fancy for a fat young pig," he paid his

threepence and started to bowl. The scoring was a complicated business, each ring having its own number and the object of the bowler being to make his bowl come to rest in the circles of highest denomination. Gotobed scored a total of 20 at the first shot, on which the man in charge shouted: "Only one short of the top score. Try again and win. As many tries as you like. Threepence a try." Gotobed paid another threepence and scored 19. Angered, he paid a third threepence, and this time he scored 17. He tried again, and scored 20. By this time there was a small crowd around him, and he seemed determined to spend the rest of the afternoon trying to beat the score of 21.

I went home in the middle of the afternoon to do some jobs, and when I returned to the fête about forty-five minutes later Mr. Gotobed was still bowling, and the crowd around him now was fairly large. "He's spent fifteen bob on shots," somebody said to me, "and he hasn't got above 21 yet. He's equalled the top score, but hasn't beat it." I watched his next try, and there is no doubt that he was improving with practice. He was placing the balls deliberately now, and there was a pattern in their lay-out. If two had not rolled just an inch over the line, he would have made a score of thirty. And, sure enough, at the try after that he scored twenty-eight.

A shout went up, and Mr. Gotobed turned to the man in charge and said, "Well, the pig's mine now, isn't it?" "It is," said the man, "if nobody beats 28. There's others I hope will try yet. If anybody equals 28 you share the pig, if anybody beats it, he wins the pig—that is to say if no one goes and beats *him*—and if nobody equals or beats 28 the pig's yours." Mr. Gotobed grunted, sounding somewhat like a pig himself, and said "It's not likely anyone is going to beat *my* score. Look at the time I took practising. Cost me nearly a pound." "That pig's worth seven pounds if it's worth a penny," said the man, "so if you win it your pound was a good investment. And I don't say as you won't."

"What's this? Bowling?" said a bright and determined female voice, and Mrs. Johnstone pushed her way into the crowd, followed by a bunch of assorted school children. Half a dozen people, speaking at once, informed her that Mr.

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Gotobed, after spending nearly a pound on threepenny shots, had won 28 points. "You can beat that, teacher," urged a fresh young voice behind her, and at once all the children took up the chorus. "Go on, teacher. You'll win, teacher." Even Gerald and Richard seemed happy at the prospect of Mrs. Johnstone competing with their father. "Right!" said Mrs. Johnstone, and rolled up the sleeves of her blouse.

She scored 19 at the first try, and 22 at the second. Three more tries yielded, respectively, 16, 25, and 20. At the sixth try she proceeded with great care, kneeling down slowly on one knee and squinting carefully along the ground before bowling. She made 25 again. Four tries later she made 28, and a cheer went up from all the children. She turned to Mr. Gotobed with a smile and said "We share the pig, Mr. Gotobed, unless you can beat your previous top score." Without a word, Mr. Gotobed paid over another threepence and gathered up the bowls.

The fête was due to finish at 6, and by that hour most of the stalls were in the process of being dismantled and the real model engine had been taken away in a truck. At 6.30 Mr. Gotobed had scored 30, but was still bowling, for Mrs. Johnstone had made a score of 32. By 7 o'clock Mr. Gotobed had made 35—three less than the maximum that could be made. There was still quite a crowd watching Mrs. Johnstone bowl at 7.15 when I went home for dinner. I returned an hour later to see what was happening, and found the crowd still there, and the rector and his wife hovering anxiously at its edge. Mrs. Johnstone, I was told, had not yet equalled Mr. Gotobed's 35, but was not giving up. She had borrowed a pound's worth of sixpences from the takings of the model engine ride, and was buying her shots two rounds at a time.

It was almost nine o'clock, with the twilight beginning to fade, when Mrs. Johnstone, as a result of a happy accident (one of the bowls struck another, with a result that after much bumping around they all turned out to be arranged in a most fortunate manner), made a score of 35. Mr. Gotobed, his face showing grim determination, was about to step forward and pay out another threepence (he had borrowed a stock of these from the seller of threepenny raffle tickets for a home-made cake) when the rector intervened.

"I think," he said, gently but firmly, "that we must consider the result a draw. It is getting late, and it's time everything was cleared away. Sell the pig and split the proceeds: you'll still make a few pounds each, in spite of having bought threepenny shots so lavishly."

Neither Mr. Gotobed nor Mrs. Johnstone seemed anxious to stop, but public opinion was on the rector's side. "Bowl a last shot, rector, to close the proceedings," said the man in charge. "I'll give it you free."

Shyly the rector stepped forward and began to bowl. He bowled rapidly, without paying much attention to what he was doing. The crowd was beginning to disperse. Mrs. Johnstone and Gotobed, strongly urged by a group of villagers, were shaking hands, Mrs. Johnstone cordially, Mr. Gotobed sulkily. A startled cry from the man in charge of "Well I'm —" made everybody turn round.

By some extraordinary fluke the rector had scored 36. People surged round the chalked numbers and counted the score again. There was no doubt; even in the fading light it was clear to all that the rector's closing shot had won the pig. The rector looked round with an embarrassed smile. "It seems

that I've won it," he said, and then went indoors with his wife. (The pig had previously been taken in charge for the night by the farmer who had presented it, to be delivered the next day to the winner.)

Mrs. Johnstone spoke through clenched teeth. "I don't call that fair," she said.

Mr. Gotobed looked at Mrs. Johnstone, and then at the retreating figure of the rector. Then he burst into a loud laugh—the first time I had ever seen him laugh.

"You didn't win it, school teacher," he shouted. "You didn't win it after all, not even half of it. I reckon my kids can stay up as long as they like now."

And he turned away and walked jauntily up the road towards his cottage.

2 2

Recrudescence of Cannibalism in Ghana?

"This was a floral design adopted by Mr. D. A. Chapman, Ghana's Ambassador in America, when he and his wife were giving a party at Shorcham Hotel, Washington, to mark the first anniversary of Ghana's independence.

And in the forefront of the replica are a brilliantly-feathered stuffed peasant and trays of the many things served at the party."

Ghana Daily Graphic



"You mean this isn't a ruse to get me on the stage for 'This is Your Life'?"

LETTERS

(Letters addressed to the Editor, unless specifically marked otherwise, may be considered for publication.)

To the Editor of Punch

SIR,—May I take issue with Ninetta Jucker about the relative merits of the Latin and Anglo-Saxon females?

Having lived in Rome for long enough to feel at times the pull of a dual nationality I refute Miss Jucker's sweeping assertion that Giovanna is better dressed than her English counterparts, and that she beats them by lengths in domestic lore.

When I first went to Rome I was amazed at the complete lack of skill in the domestic arts not only of Italian girls but of their mothers also (not for nothing is it said "As the old cock crows so the young one learns"). Used to my mother's orderly routine of jam-making, preserving, pickling and pastry-making, I was astonished to find a world in which the lady of the house frequently dashed off at eight o'clock at night to buy one egg which she would serve with salami and fried cauliflower for her son's supper. When I inquired about a larder I was met with blank stares. Shopping was done from day to day, indeed, one might almost claim from hour to hour.

In philosophy and literature, yes, Miss Jucker, but in domestic lore most definitely No. Yours faithfully,
Canton

ELISABETH MURRAY

[Could it be that the lady of the house could afford only one egg at a time?—Editor.]

ANY OLD GRIDS

SIR,—Contrary to Alison Adburgham's firm belief, which is shared by the majority of people in this island, there is no legal obligation on cyclists to fit, or to use, a bell. The relevant section of the Act merely requires an "audible warning of approach," which may be by means of hooter, whistle, siren, sleighbell, singing "Daisy, Daisy," or shouting "Hey!"

With one exception: those energetic people who race fifty miles in under two hours before breakfast are enjoined by their ruling body "that an efficient bell" must be carried. Carried, mind you, not rung.

Yours etc.,

London, W.12 R. G. CLEMENTS

IT GETS BY

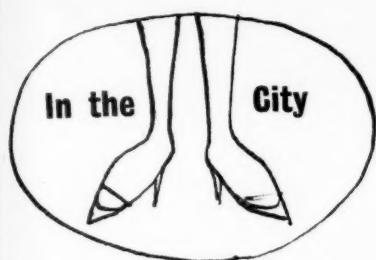
SIR,—Norman Mansbridge, writing from Marshall, Michigan, gave examples of the slogans used for advertising cigarettes and quoted the cigarette advertisement "WINSTONS TASTE GOOD, LIKE A CIGARETTE SHOULD," adding that this "easily gets by." It gets by, obviously, but someone will make a study to ascertain what it has done to our blood pressure. James Thurber suggested to brewers that they adopt the slogan "WE STILL BREW GOOD LIKE WE USED TO COULD." It does not get by easily. Yours sincerely,

New York, 25

SARAH F. MORSE



DAVID
SIMPSON



Vertical or Horizontal?

ANY enterprise with the growth bug in its vitals—and all the good ones have it—is faced with the alternative: shall its expansion be vertical or horizontal? This does not mean shall it grow tall or fat? Horizontal growth is the merging of firms engaged in the same line of business; and if carried to the horizon it ends up in a monopoly. Vertical combination is the growth of the business by its extension to the various processes of the enterprise in which it is engaged.

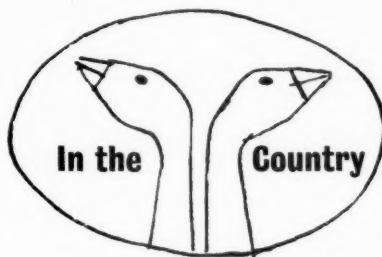
A fair example of horizontal combination is the formation in 1929 of the Lancashire Cotton Corporation which amalgamated (and rescued from probable extinction) over fifty cotton-spinning companies. A vertical combination (withal with a touch of the horizontal) is the Unilever Group which controls such of its staple products as soap and margarine, from the moment at which the vegetable oils and fats are produced in Africa and elsewhere to the time when the cake of soap or the pound of margarine is sold to the customer in one of the group's own stores. The two-dimensional aspect of this group's expansion comes in through the many amalgamations with similar enterprises, engineered first by that tough little Lancastrian, the first Lord Leverhulme, but continued since his reign ended.

To-day vertical combination is in the fashion, encouraged by the fact that when the horizontal is pushed too far it will fall foul of the Monopolies Act. The motor industry has in recent years been well to the fore in this manner of combination and development. One striking example has been provided by the Ford Motor Company which last Wednesday opened its new "Thames" foundry—£8 million-worth of new skyline and gadgetry at Dagenham in which cylinder blocks and heads will be cast with the most advanced techniques the world can show to-day. There are not many car firms that operate their own foundry.

One noteworthy bull point about this development for the holder of Ford

shares is that the cost of the plant has come entirely out of the company's own resources. It is a bull point for the future since this ploughing back of profits, though it has cut down the shareholders' dividends in the past, promises a more lavish helping of jam to-morrow.

This is by no means the first of Ford Motors' "vertical" ascents. Another was the acquisition in 1953 of Briggs' Motor Bodies, the company which now supplies Fords' with most of their accessories. The Pressed Steel strike has underlined the wisdom of those motor car manufacturers that have secured control over their essential supplies of bodies. Among them are British Motor Corporation which owns Fisher and Ludlow Ltd., but whose subsidiary is not large enough to have saved B.M.C. from being one of the victims of the Pressed Steel strike. Much more recently there has been an



Taking What's Going

IT's odd, but there is nothing so reliable as a miracle. For spring is nothing less than that. Each year the same bare branches break out in the same fireworks. In some places in Devon they don't talk of spring, but call it "Break-Bud." Yet although this spring looked like any other spring, this year our maypole was hardly traditional.

Six weeks ago the village observed that a Post Office van was out in the roads doing some repairs to the telegraph posts. That was no unusual sight near the coast where the lines are blown down every few months. But our interest was aroused when we saw that the men were not repairing the lines but removing the old posts and replacing them with new ones. Apparently this is done every fifteen years.

I do not know who it was who first asked the foreman whether he could buy some of the old posts that were left lying on the ground, but within a few days the news had spread round the village that these magnificent poles could be acquired for the paltry sum of three-and-six. The Post Office realizes

offer by Standard Motors to secure control of Mulliners, Ltd., the builders of high-class motor car bodies.

Here is vertical combination *par excellence*. It testifies to the optimistic vigour of the British car industry and to the fact that it is not resting on its present laurels but is busy weaving still bigger crowns for itself. The present prosperity of the industry, and of all those that produce its accessories, is one of the miracles of the British economy. The latest production figures are slightly down on the peak of a few months ago—and the Pressed Steel strike will, alas! accentuate the decline. But there is a keen demand for the cars and lorries coming off the assembly lines, and the industry is keeping up the remarkable performance of exporting about half what it produces. What this means for the accessories is shown by the brilliant results that were recently published by Dunlops.

LOMBARD LANE

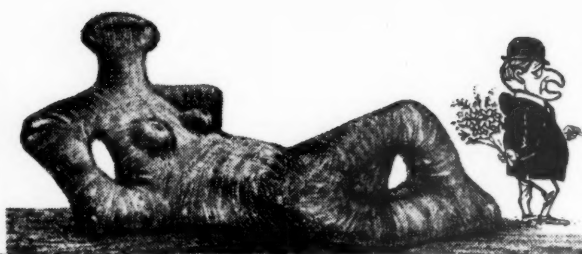
that many are worth ten times that amount but has to sell them as firewood in case some should be found unsafe. It is their method of ensuring against litigation. At any rate, the scramble began. Those of us without a car decided that it was worth while acquiring four telegraph poles with which to construct a lean-to or a garage. Others, who had never thought of keeping poultry, decided that this was their opportunity to make a fowl-house. Nobody intended to use them for firewood. Nobody worried how they would store them. Our only problem has been to convey the wretched poles from a grass verge into our own territory.

This demanded improvisation such as was seen when Stonehenge was originally erected. Nothing defeats the Devonian when he can get something for nothing, or for very little. Within twenty-four hours every pole had disappeared. It would have taken a Government department six months to have removed them.

The poles safely stored away, our avid eyes turned to the British Railways. There is a rumour that the line to Torrington is to be dismantled. This will mean railway sleepers going cheap.

Can anybody suggest what I can usefully construct with seven telegraph poles and a lorry-load of railway sleepers? There must be something. Even if there isn't—you never know when they'll come in handy—as we say in Devon.

RONALD DUNCAN

FOR
WOMEN

Woman at the Wheel

THE recent appointment of Miss Denise McCann as Chairman and Managing Director of the British School of Motoring has placed her in control of five hundred motor cars and seven hundred men. Compare that with the average woman's lack of control over one car, one man, and it is clear that Miss McCann is a very exceptional woman. She herself denies there is any foundation for the man-made myth of incompetency in women drivers. They are less impatient and aggressive than men drivers. They are less given to retaliation, to titting for tatting; and they are not invaded by that dangerous sense of power which sweeps over so many men when they get behind a steering wheel. In addition to these negative virtues they have a positive instinct for self-preservation, and are more conscious than men that they are taking a lethal weapon on the roads.

With regard to this last point it could be argued that women, although aware that their weapons are lethal, are maladroit in handling them.

A woman has two methods of firing a pistol, both wrong: she fires it looking the other way, or else with her eyes shut. Can we be sure that she never drives her car in either of these ways? Certainly she is liable to have her aim diverted by a display of hats in a shop window, or the glimpse of a friend, in a new hat, on the pavement; and her automatic braking or swerving at such times may drive other road-users to distraction—or even destruction. But she is a creature of impulse only in matters of millinery and social contacts, and is seldom guilty of the selfish bad manners

which Miss McCann considers the root of all the worst evils on the road.

Miss McCann's association with the British School of Motoring began in 1947 when she was appointed consultant for rebuilding and service expansion at the principal and branch offices—of which there are over a hundred. In 1951 she joined the Board and in 1953, at the age of forty, became Assistant Managing Director. She is a Council member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists, and also heads the College of Aeronautical and Automobile Engineering, which trains engineers and mechanics for maintenance and development in transport, and teaches disabled people to drive. Working with doctors, she has handled cases from all over the world, and adapts patients' own cars to their disabilities, often teaching handicapped people who have never driven before.

Herself, she likes to recall that her association with the British School of Motoring actually began before the war,

as a pupil; she is an Old Girl, so to speak. She does not divulge how quickly she learnt. Most pupils take a nine- or twelve-hour course and then are given an opinion on how many more lessons they will need to pass the test. Natural born

drivers have been known to be ready for testing in six hours from scratch. Mr. R. G. Cooper, the Chief Instructor, says women make the best pupils. They are more responsive, less opinionated, more willing to be told—but not by other women. Although the B.S.M.'s School of Instruction for Instructors has trained many women and found them the equal of men, it has also

found them to be less acceptable to pupils of both sexes. The tradition that men are masters of the art of driving dies hard.

From Mr. Cooper one learns of Miss McCann's brilliant administrative acumen, her flair for seeing an immediate solution to involved problems, and her gift for getting on with people—but that last one would have guessed for oneself from the warmth and humour of her personality. This high-powered tycoon may have a core of steel, but it is the heart of gold that radiates. Her praise is not all for women drivers: she allows men superior parking proficiency. They are more adroit at hair's-breadth reversing and skilful manipulation in tight corners. Women require more room to manoeuvre, and are inclined to park all over the place with a fine disregard for local by-laws... but against that, surely, must be balanced the skill with which women drivers, in tight corners, handle their policemen.

ALISON ADBURGHAM

☆

Tepidation

IT's only the climate that does it—
The "H" and the "A" and the
Sack,
The Cloche and the Knees and the
Silly Chemise
And the Minus-a-Top-and-a-Back;
For if we were somewhere Pacific
With palms and lagoons and the lot,
These statistics of ours would be
smothered in flowers
Whether orchids were fashion or not;
And there's never a Polar occasion
That isn't a furry affair.
So let's stick together! It's only the
weather

That leaves us with nothing to wear.

HAZEL TOWNSON



Monroe Doctrine

THOUGH we no longer stride down the Strand in the steps of Mrs. Pankhurst, or chain ourselves, with a martyred air, to railings, it seems we cannot be so sure of female emancipation. Brighton Council recently debated whether the two women on their Watch Committee should be removed from office "because on occasion sex films have to be vetted and it would be somewhat embarrassing for women to be present at the same time as men."

Somewhat embarrassing? Who is first in the queue, with a camp-stool and a Thermos, when X films are exhibited? Who tells you if the *coiffure* is dyed or natural? Who tells you if Those Parts of the Anatomy which the American censors seek to hide are false or genuine? Who tells you that Juliet is forty-eight if she's a day, that the bobbysoxer has just divorced her fifth? Who, in fact, gives you an unembarrassed, impartial judgment on women (and men), if not a woman?

I'm glad that the two Brighton women were kept in office (37 votes to 10); but the Council may learn a lesson all the same. If it weren't for women there'd be no 34-24-36. There'd be no Bardot, no Lollobrigida, no Monroe, no Magnani. There'd be no X films. There'd be no films at all. And, incidentally, there'd be no Watch Committee. JOANNA RICHARDSON

while if I wait I shall have neither, seems to me to contain a fallacy. For some reason you also appear to think it is my wish to wear clothes that will, as you express it, "light up the High St. from end to end." Nothing is farther from my thoughts; nor did I agree with your remark about "letting people see you've got some flesh below the collar-bone." Surely no girl can be well-dressed whose collar does not fit neatly round the neck.

Thank you so much for arranging a dinner party last night. You mentioned that Xavier Yeo Zircon has a great future as a sculptor, but even if he is more or less my contemporary I don't quite see why you should have thought him interesting. As you know, I have studied civics, and I would have been glad to discuss the place of sculpture in municipal planning, but Mr. Zircon seemed only concerned to persuade me to join him at some skiffle cellar where no one without a record of three months' work in an Espresso bar is usually admitted. Your friend Mr. Abernethy, on the other hand, was much more planning-conscious, and after you had left with Mr. Zircon—I assume for that cellar—we had a valuable discussion on Zoning Water Supplies. Sometimes Mr. Abernethy did not seem to

realize that he belongs to your age group rather than mine, though I'm sure he's right about all his wives misunderstanding him.

Please come and see me here at Greystone. I have already signed two University petitions, and been invited to take part in a protest meeting, a demonstration, and a penitence march. Coaches have to be hired for the march, so please let me know at once if you wish to join us. I don't think Mr. Zircon would be interested, but Mr. Abernethy might like to come.

Thank you again for putting me up. Before I left this morning I helped your daily to clear up the mess in the kitchen, and as I really don't like scent I gave her the bottle, called something Dior, that you gave me.

Your loving niece Stella.

VIOLET POWELL

"There can hardly ever have been a time when the 'line' so favoured spreading hips and thickening waists . . . If you are heavy-jowled, a straight box jacket will echo and exaggerate the squareness of your face . . . Whatever your age, whatever your size . . . If you are the stocky, thick-set kind . . . so many older women, conscious of putting on weight . . ."—*Fashion piece, Daily Telegraph*

Yes, yes, but anything for me?

Letter from a Niece

St. Agatha's

Greystone University

DEAR AUNT SUSAN,—I am very sorry not to have been able to see you this morning in order to thank you for having me to stay, but your breathing was heavy and your face flushed, so I thought it better not to rouse you. It was very kind of you to take me shopping yesterday, and I quite see what you mean about the *boutiques* in Chelsea being just as expensive as the ones in Mayfair without the agony of catching a No. 19 bus (when running). Your advice to me to spend my quarter's dress allowance at once, on the ground that then I shall at least have clothes if not money,



"I suppose you expect a tip?"

Toby Competitions

No. 19.—Praise Famous Men

WORDSWORTH liked to get the name in the first line, e.g. *Clarkson*, it's been an arduous hill to climb; Spade with which *Wilkinson* hath tilled his lands. Write a verse, maximum eight lines, in this manner, with one of these names in the first line:

Pickles	Amis
Wyatt	Dulles
Steele	Dali

A prize consisting of a framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up will receive Toby bookmarks. Entries (any number, but each on a separate piece of paper and accompanied by a separate entry token, cut out from the bottom left-hand corner of this page) by first post on Friday, June 13, to TOBY COMPETITION No. 19, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Report on Competition No. 16 (Strike a New Note)

There was a large entry for No. 16, in which the task was to devise a new reason for striking by a new trade union. Many competitors seized on the current disputes and worked out an extension of transport troubles, but this was scarcely the idea; a new field of unrest was required. Wives rallied round each other with calls for a domestic charter; other categories for which solidarity was demanded included cricketers, organ-blowers, ice-cream salesmen, pedestrians and churchgoers. The winner,

F. H. E. TOWNSHEND-ROSE
111 THORNBURY ROAD
OSTERLEY
MIDDLESEX

introduced an ingenious note of relentless industrial logic:

The Amalgamated Society of Night-Shift Operatives will strike if they do not get a British Summer Time addition to basic rates. Members of the Society, paid on an hourly basis, claim (1) when clocks

are advanced they lose an hour during which they would be available for work, and should be paid for this hour (in addition to "clock" time); (2) when clocks are put back they work an additional hour without payment; (3) when British Summer Time is in force the first hour of the shift should be paid for at pre-shift rates. They also contend that the last hour of the shift is artificially advanced, and this prejudices them in qualifying for overtime rates.

This receives the award of the framed *Punch* original; the following runners-up all receive Toby bookmarks:

WAR (the Writers About Royalty Union) is on the warpath. They will strike, they say, unless (a) more Royalties are created, or (b) the present ones are allowed to lead more colourful lives. "Ever since the Coronation," said WAR's General Secretary, "we have been rearranging the same words to say the same things without actually repeating ourselves word for word. There is, after all, a limit to human ingenuity. We are dedicated to the task of satisfying our public. It's hard, slogging work at the best of times, and now we find that we have used several times over every stunt and gimmick that is even barely permissible. We can't make bricks without straw. Give us the tools and we will carry on with the job." KATHARINE DOWLING, 22 Markham St., S.W.3

A Trade Union of Children between the ages of three and six has been formed to uphold a level of sane conversation. The members intend to go on strike until their elders learn not to address them as if they were congenital idiots, and to realize that their hearing is excellent when they are the subjects of conversation. They also ban the phrase *Pas devant les enfants* as having gone out with after-tea visits to the drawing-room dressed in velvets or muslins.—Mrs. W. F. TULLOCH, 41 Rutland Gate, S.W.7

General workers, finding themselves predominantly on strike, decided to form a Union to protect their interests as strikers. This body, the General Strikers Union, gained rapidly both in member-

ship and popularity. Unfortunately, however, it was refused recognition by the T.U.C. As a protest against this rebuff the members decided unanimously on strike action—and returned to work. G. R. PICKETT, 53 Days Lane, Biddenham, Bedford

The Secretary of The National Union of Punters on Pools (NUPOP) warned of possible strike action. "Among the demands he listed were a reduction in the Government levy on members' earnings from pools, shorter hours even if this meant larger coupons and blot-free paper, stamp-duty-free postal orders and reply-paid envelopes. "How many hours are spent away from the educative Telly queueing for those? And in a Welfare State why not a pool for an All-Wrong Forecast?"—ERIC EDWARDS, 25 Weststone Lane, West Kirby, Wirral

The Society of Craftsmen, Operatives and Workers came out on strike (unofficial) because the Federation of Employers Associations acceded to a wage demand promptly and without argument. "Meks Union look absurd," commented Lancashire branch member Bob Roberts, "treating us like kids, no proper negotiations, joost 'yes, yes, yes' every time." Shop Steward Dick Richards said "Stands to reason, lads were looking forward to income-tax rebate and their bit o' strike pay. And there's a lot wants doing in garden this time o' year."—TREVENEN PETERS, 69 Renters Avenue, Hendon, N.W.4

A minority of members of the A.F.M.C. (Association of Fathers of Male Children) are striking for higher rates of pocket money from sons whose weekly earnings as non-U singers exceed £1,000 a week. ROGER TILL, 14 Western Hill, Durham

The Model Girls Union (M.G.U.) threaten to strike because of the Frou-Frou, the Autumn Line, which looks its best on the fuller figure (39-27-39) rather than on the slender type (34-22-35) which is all the rage now. Members say they have gone to great lengths to attain this year's figures and it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to reach the required new figures by autumn. A court of arbitration decided that 37-25-36 was a fair compromise, retaining a certain fullness without the addition of an extra two inches, but the M.G.U. rejected these figures as being disproportionate. MARGARET DRAY, 118 Munster Avenue, Hounslow

Strike action followed a breakdown in negotiations between the Associated Unions of Radio Families (incorporating the Archers, Barlowes, Blisses, Dales and Huggetts) and the Broadcasting authorities, who were not prepared to meet a claim for a 10 per cent increase in compensation for loss of true identity, with the many legal, social, personal and domestic inconveniences and misunderstandings that such loss might entail. L. J. HUGHES, 23 Cherry Garden Lane, Folkestone

"The Smithfield meat market was at a standstill yesterday—but salesmen sent this message to Londoners: 'Don't worry.'" *Daily Express*

Thanks for nothing.





CRITICISM



BOOKING OFFICE

"Anger's self I needs must kiss"

The Angry Decade: A Survey of the Cultural Trends of the Nineteen-fifties.
Kenneth Allsop. Owen, 21/-

TIREDSOME and misleading as the terms "classical" and "romantic" can become if used to excess, there can be no doubt that they also have their useful side. Their general abandonment makes much contemporary literary criticism seem like climbing up the rocky side of the mountain when there is a comparatively easy ascent at the back.

The fact is, of course, that we have all become so hopelessly steeped in Romanticism that it is hard for anyone to imagine any other point of view. This shows itself chiefly in the general agreement that there has never before been such an epoch as our own in its horror, decadence, boredom, danger, etc., etc. In short, what Mr. Kingsley Amis succinctly describes as "sickness-of-our-society stuff."

No one ever gives a thought to the fact that almost every age has supposed the worst of its own time. What about living in A.D. 999, when, apart from any other local inconveniences, everyone surmised that the end of the world was due in A.D. 1000? It is all very well now to say that we all know it wasn't. The people who lived then thought it was. From their point of view it was every bit as disturbing as the H-bomb.

However, since most people nowadays feel that everything in contemporary life is exceptional, inevitable traces of this approach colour what Mr. Kenneth Allsop has to say here about writers of what he calls "The Angry Decade." He does, it is true, mention a few of an older generation like Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon who also had their "angry" stage, but, after all, Byron and Shelley were saying just the same kind of thing a century and a half ago.

However, although there are moments when he will suddenly loose off a deafening rattle of clichés, Mr. Allsop

has written an interesting book. He dives head-first into the contemporary literary fishpond, describes the various specimens he encounters, and is not afraid to say what he thinks. You may not agree with all his judgments, but at least they are judgments. The book is an antidote to those many well-meaning, stodgy critical works appearing all the time, which give the impression that writing ceased with James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence.

All the same, I think that some sort of "classical" and "romantic" grading would have helped his analysis. After

all, to be "angry" is a subjective state—and one obviously inimical to classicism—so that at a blow we should be able to categorize a great number of the runners in this particular race. In fact Mr. Amis is one of the few who might be said to write in a "classical" manner; that is to say about individuals as they have always been, however much their superficial circumstances may seem the result of present-day life.

Among many other names considered here I was glad to find a good word for that excellent novel *Mr. Nicholas*, by Thomas Hinde, a book full of eccentric humour and by no means without its horrific side.

Turning to the theatre, Mr. Allsop does indeed point out in Mr. John Osborne an example of an extreme new "romanticism"; and he shows how Mr. Osborne's plays (in spite of much sound and fury to suggest the contrary) often lose touch in their detail with social realities. At the same time it must be admitted that a dramatist gets his effects in a different manner from a novelist. He is not open to criticism in the same manner if what has been judged effective on the stage is less convincing in the cold light of day.

Finally, Mr. Allsop examines that curious underworld of literary comedians who add so greatly to the enjoyment of contemporary letters. His obvious good nature makes him insist that they possess a weight which surely detracts from, rather than enhances, their high quality as knockabouts. It is no kindness to them to be too serious about their antics.

One thing that emerges from the book is what an astonishingly good thing some of these writers have made out of it all, in spite of their grouching. Mr. Allsop sometimes uses that rather silly phrase "the Establishment"—but if you don't belong to "the Establishment" when you knock up twenty or thirty thousand pounds, and every paper contains your name, when do you?

By its nature *The Angry Decade* is impossible to summarize, but it will be

NOVEL FACES



XIX—ROSAMOND LEHMANN

*A Dusty Answer where the young heart beats,
Better survey the Weather in the Streets.*

a splendid book for the connoisseur of literary phases in, say, twenty years time. Then a real period flavour will have matured, and, oh, the nostalgia . . .

ANTHONY POWELL

The Man with Good Intentions. James Barlow. Cassell, 15/-

This is much the best of Mr. Barlow's religious melodramas. Russia (described under the gauzy alias "They") sends an agent to assassinate an opponent of the forthcoming Peace Conference, a national figure who uses his gift of corrosive cynicism to spread pessimism in the interests of the armament manufacturers who employ him. Pursued by an Intelligence officer like a stage commercial traveller, the agent goes to ground in the prospective victim's home town; but here he falls in love with a nurse who is a Christian.

Mr. Barlow is a frank disciple of Mr. Graham Greene; he lacks his power of making evil convincing but is much better on goodness. The argument between Communism and Christianity is conducted at O rather than A level and underestimates the intellectuality of Communism. (And do Communists in fact ever try to bump off leaders of opinion in the West?) However, the serious intentions of the novel are kept in the background and the foreground is a very good thriller indeed.

R. G. G. P.

Inside Russia To-day. John Gunther. Hamish Hamilton, 25/-

If this is not among the best of Mr. Gunther's books the fault is not exactly his. He gets his information not

only by travelling and interviews but also by wide and quick reading. The quality of his books depends greatly on the quality of the books he reads. There have been excellent books about Soviet Russia, but they have necessarily been largely conjectural, not pretending to give a clear and accurate account of their subject. A writer like Mr. Gunther needs firm guidance; he does not reach his own conclusions but collects them from others. That the conclusions differ does not matter provided they are definite; Mr. Gunther knows how to make a good selection for impartial presentation to his readers. He has a neat mind and is unprejudiced, but he is neither subtle nor imaginative. Perhaps if he were he could not produce large books tightly packed with information so quickly. Unfortunately, in this case, the indispensable preliminary work has not been adequately done; and the book, as a systematic account of a whole state of affairs, is not nearly as good as some of the author's other works. Still, it is readable and full of interesting facts and quotable opinions.

J. P.

Made for Man. A. P. Herbert. Methuen, 15/-

Once again A. P. H. has achieved, against all the odds, an exciting and amusing novel containing a powerful charge of propaganda. This is likely to echo disturbingly round Lambeth Palace; for one of the main characters is an Archbishop of Canterbury (not Dr. Fisher) who is personally concerned in the prevention of two respectable second marriages in church, and whose faith is gradually undermined by an outrageous course of shock-therapy planned by an eccentric admiral in cahoots with a reformer easily recognized, in all but name, as A. P. H. It is the uncommon strength of the book that it stands squarely as a novel while giving dramatic interest to expert, and very fair, arguments about the Established Church's attitude to divorce.

Made for Man accuses the rigorist bishops of having gone back, unconstitutionally, on Parliament's intentions in the toleration clause of the Act of 1937, by turning the screw on willing clergymen. Its case is very difficult to answer, and once more a great many blameless but unhappy couples have cause to thank its author.

E. O. D. K.

Come Unto Me. Herbert Silvette. Christopher Johnson, 13/6

The author is Professor of Theoretical Pharmacology in the Medical College of Virginia, U.S.A., and writes novels in his spare time (one of them a parody of the Third Book of Rabelais); the present example is described as a satire ("also a searing attack upon corruption in an American labor union") and the name of Jonathan Swift is mentioned in connection with it; characters include a female red-headed wrestler called the

Springfield Spitfire, her husband the Turkish Terror, and their albino-midget manager: a "thrifty" Scot named Murdoch Mackintosh: a Sino-Japanese B.A. ("Permit that I remove uppermost outer garments, celestial Spitfire?"); two coffee-and-mescaline, Science Fiction addicts; samples of dialogue are "Whoooooooooooooooooooooooooooo," "Waaaaaaaaaaaaaach!" and even "*****!"; while the scene is set in the state of Washa Washa. You have been warned. J. M-R.

Six Wings: Men of Science in the Renaissance. George Sarton. The Bodley Head, 25/-

The late Professor Sarton of Harvard devoted all his working years to the history of science. But his approach to his subject was that of a humanist. He envisaged science as one of three great manifestations of the human spirit, the others being art and religion. What interested him was the intellectual and moral climate which made scientific progress possible, and the natures, rather than the details of the achievement, of the men who advanced it. In his latest book, which he did not live to see in print, Erasmus and Vives figure beside Copernicus and Cardan, Paracelsus, Palissy and Paré; while Leonardo, the author's particular hero, has a chapter to himself. The book then offers a wider survey of the century and a half which it covers than its sub-title might be taken to imply. Perhaps indeed it contains too much. Though presented as a "broad synthesis," it is over-stuffed with names, dates and minutiae. This makes it rather strenuous reading. Nevertheless, and even if Sarton was no Burckhardt, to read it is well worth while.

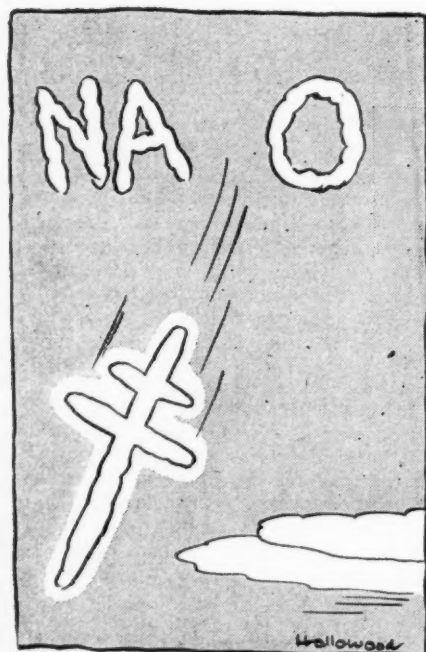
F. B.

The Mist Procession. Lord Vansittart. Hutchinson, 35/-

By the time of his death Lord Vansittart had carried his memoirs down to 1936, when he was still managing to cling on as Head of the Foreign Office despite the resistance of the Appeasers to his anti-German policy. Grim and gay, the mannered prose, sometimes witty and sometimes unintelligible, rises far above the pallidities of most official autobiography. The descriptions of Baldwin and MacDonald are novel and appreciative; that of Sir Anthony Eden is a model of English malicious prose.

The long apologia, crammed with facts for historians and gossip for the general reader, is convincing because, after all, what Vansittart said would happen did happen. And yet . . . he judged the world he lived in only by its decline from the world he had known as a boy, without much comprehension of what made it tick. If he had been on the wrong side what would his activities look like to-day—for instance his leaking to the press of facts unwelcome to his Minister? The book throws an interesting light on the political impartiality of the Civil Service.

R. G. G. P.



AT THE PLAY

Uncle Vanya (SADLER'S WELLS)
The Troubled Past (SADLER'S WELLS)
Flesh to a Tiger (ROYAL COURT)
Verdict (STRAND)
The Big Tickle (DUKE OF YORK'S)
The Party (NEW)
 George Dillon (COMEDY)

THE four-play Moscow repertory is now in full permutation, and if the last pair are less successful than the first it is more the fault of the plays than the players. The interwoven frustrations of *Uncle Vanya* are much more obviously contrived than those of *The Cherry Orchard* or *The Three Sisters*, and moreover are not relieved, as in those two, by patches of gaiety. The Moscow Arts production offers us a performance of cool grace by Margarite Anastasieva as Elena, a commanding, romantic one from Leonid Gubanov as Astrov (of particular interest to those who saw his flitting, spectacle-fidgeting Trofimov of *The Cherry Orchard*), the impeccable supporting playing which we have so readily come to take for granted, and a stage thunderstorm to put nature herself out of countenance. (What British thunder-sheet ever rattled the back wall of the dress circle?) All this and Vassily Orlov too: his is a shaggy, distraught Vanya which, despite a deeply-studied interpretation, remains the character that is at once the play and the weakness of the play. We are bound to withhold sympathy, though the author plainly invites it, for a man who sees himself as tragic but is palpably absurd. It is a pity that the company's third shot from the Chekhov locker was not *The Seagull* instead.

It is a pity, too, that *The Troubled Past* was not another and a better play. Those who had hoped to see something of modern Russia depicted in this work by Rakhmanov, a modern playwright, were disappointed to find its action beginning significantly in 1916. Its dramatic content is disappointing too. It unfolds the unstimulating tale of a professor who distresses his pupils by writing a book advocating that the intelligentsia should cast in their lot with the Party; after a series of loosely co-ordinated incidents and the passage of a momentous year of Russian history, he receives telephoned congratulations from Lenin. Happy ending and curtain. To be fair, the initiated in the audience (who often seem to be members of the company not for the moment working) laughed a good deal, chiefly at the dialogue. The playing was as scrupulously detailed as ever.

Flesh to a Tiger, at the Royal Court, has at least the merit of providing a fresh setting, and presents a theme not examined in the theatre before—the struggle between superstition and sense in a Jamaican slum of splintering, poverty-stricken shacks. But the author,



Della—CLEO LAINE

Shepherd Aaron—JAMES CLARKE

[Flesh to a Tiger]

a young Jamaican, Barry Reckord, seems uncertain whether his play is about the problem or the characters he has chosen to illustrate it, and this leads to a series of misjudged emphases. He prepares us for a revelation of cosmic truth, and instead involves us in the highly personal dilemmas of individuals; these, partly from shallow performances, partly from the blunting effect of "poetic" writing, fail to cast enough light on his larger theme. Except for a white doctor, of whom Mr. Edgar Wreford, though a sound actor, seems able to make nothing, the whole company is coloured, and is most at ease in the voodoo dances and rites besprinkling the play not always at the strategic dramatic moment. Miss Cleo Laine, better known as a singer, makes a gallant attempt at the leading part, and shows promise of being a very compelling actress when technique has been added to feeling and intelligence.

At the Strand Miss Agatha Christie's new work, *Verdict*, was booed by the gallery, and probably it was only from an anxiety to spare the cast's feelings that the stalls forbore to join in. *Verdict* is something between a confidence trick and a sadistic practical joke, with the audience as the victim. For two-thirds of its course it follows the familiar Christie pattern, working up through significant oddity and subtle hint, all stored eagerly in the receiving mind, to the moment when the master-stroke of

revelation is bound to fall. It doesn't. As the last act moves peacefully towards its close, with Mr. Gerard Heinz reading Landor aloud, to the accompaniment of Tchaikovsky on the gramophone, we realize with angry astonishment that the author has not been attempting a Christie play at all, but a play. Mr. Heinz sustained a long and unbelievable role gallantly, aided by Patricia Jessel, lovely, intelligent and flattering some beautiful clothes, and a neatly pert newcomer in Moira Redmond. All gave one of their bows to their creator in the stage-box, but with what feelings in their heart none could tell. For once it is no crime to disclose who done it. Miss Christie done it. The mystery is why.

Mr. Charles Hickman directed both *Verdict* and *The Big Tickle*, and probably wished at times, as he shuttled between rehearsals, that the first had shown as much ingenuity in the cause of thrills as the second in the cause of comedy. Mr. Ronald Millar's entertaining trifle, ideal for the family party with a good dinner under its belt, is frankly unpretentious. It twists the arm of a ludicrous plot—concert pianist conspires with jewel thieves to finance her brother's political coup in obscure South American republic—and extorts laughter fairly continuously. Yvonne Arnaud, all crumpled pouts and ecstatic gasps, wrings her share from a situation in which she presents her rich friends with tickets for

her concerts so that an amiable trio of larcenists can clean out their safes, and Jack Hulbert, as her ideal and devoted husband, gets three laughs out of lines where lesser men would get one. A long early passage in which the audience, via Miss Arnaud, is instructed in the mysteries of housebreaking idiom, holds things up a little, but after that there's no holding anything. Rex Garner, Bernard Cribbins and Peter Bayliss do handsomely by the law-breakers, and the talents of Arnold Bell are prodigally squandered on a mere glimpse of his now well-established portrait of a Chief-Inspector.

Actors are not the best judges of a play. In judging *The Party* a suitable vehicle for his most welcome return trip

REP SELECTION

Bristol Old Vic: *The Pier*, by James Forsyth, to June 14th.
Nottingham Playhouse: *The Rain-maker*, June 9th to 21st.
Birmingham: *Hedda Gabler*, from June 10th for four weeks.
Playhouse, Liverpool: *Look Back in Anger*, to June 14th.

to the West End Mr. Charles Laughton has mistaken the part (so to speak) for the whole. The part is fat, the play inclined to be thin, and though Mr. Laughton is without rival as a thickener, even he cannot quite bring the evening to the needed consistency. The author, Miss Jane Arden (a young English girl, Mr. Laughton told us in his curtain speech—but American idiom keeps creeping oddly in) tells of a chronic drunk (guess who) newly-returned from some harrowing therapy, whose seventeen-year-old daughter resents and despises him for old humiliations and woundings. His still-loving wife is battling to keep the home going. A shrill hat-shop proprietress adores him because of his jokes, and hopes he will come back to her as her rollicking assistant. A gentle, necessary lodger admires him to the extent of paying the medical fees out of his life savings. The daughter's boyfriend sees value in his ginny moralizing. And though, after early uncertainties, the plot is seen to turn on the possibility of a reconciliation between father and child, the father has so little to recommend him, as presented by the author, that we are inclined to feel that the child is the only one with the right idea; but the author plainly means us to feel the opposite. It would be unfair to disclose the denouement, though the play's main structural fault is that this is achieved not by credible manipulation of character or incident but by the insertion of whatever speeches are needed to achieve it. In patches the writing is good, in sparser patches very good. But words alone won't do, even on the mobile lips of Mr. Laughton. He remains, nevertheless, in every way tremendous, and is

staunchly supported. Miss Ann Lynn, in particular, fills out the daughter in every available cranny, and is going to be an actress of special quality very soon indeed.

John Osborne's collaboration with Anthony Creighton, *George Dillon*, was produced at the Royal Court earlier this year, and is now to be seen at the Comedy. A review appeared on this page on February 19. In brief, it depicts the life and loves of a Jimmy Porter prototype, but whether he is thwarted artist or scrounging fraud remains unclear. There is entertainment, nevertheless; particularly in a very good second act.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

The Russians, of course, at Sadler's Wells. *The Three Sisters* is probably the best bet. *The Dock Brief* and *What Shall We Tell Caroline?* (Garrick—16/4/58). *Not in the Book*, a good comedy-thriller (Criterion—16/4/58). *Expresso Bongo*, the world of pop music exposed (Saville—30/4/58). J. B. BOOTHROYD

AT THE PICTURES

The Long, Hot Summer
Fugitive in Saigon

GOOD God, no, I thought about ten or fifteen minutes from the end of *The Long, Hot Summer* (Director: Martin Ritt)—no, surely they can't be going to give it that sort of box-office ending, after more than an hour and a half of such good stuff... But alas, yes, so it proved; all ended in a rosy glow of friendly feeling which, as the whole

of the picture up to that moment had shown us, was completely out of character and improbable. And is this sort of thing really box-office? Would a film of *Hamlet* be made a bigger commercial success by an extra scene explaining that Ophelia was rescued from drowning and Hamlet recovered of his wound? How simple-minded do the film-makers think we are?

Not that I'm putting *The Long, Hot Summer* on a level with *Hamlet*: it isn't even William Faulkner's *The Hamlet*, it's a story contrived by two other people out of that and two other Faulkner stories, using his scene and adapting some of his characters and incidents. But the point is that most of the story depends on these characters, on their behaving as the people they are would behave. It simply isn't good enough to tell us they suddenly decided to be nice to each other so that we can all go away happy. If we found their behaviour credible up to then, we don't believe in it now, and we go away irritated.

This is a steamy melodrama of the South, but the tone, the atmosphere of it seems somehow reminiscent more of Tennessee Williams than of Faulkner. It is dominated by Orson Welles as a Mississippi landowning tyrant named Will Varner, obsessed with the wish for a grandson. His son Jody (Anthony Franciosa), weak and weakened by living in his shadow, has a "Baby Doll" sort of wife as feather-headed as a child, and his daughter Clara (Joanne Woodward), even though unmarried at twenty-three, unreasonably persists in waiting for somebody she can be happy with instead of throwing herself at the first man in sight. But there are few men in sight, anyway;



Will Varner—ORSON WELLES

and the spark for the drama is provided by the arrival of Ben Quick (Paul Newman), a casual, confident, foot-loose young tough with an eye to the main chance and a reputation as a "barn burner."

Well, you see the pattern: it isn't subtle. The old man recognizes young Ben as a natural pirate of his own kind, and begins to favour him against Jody and to needle Clara into considering him as a husband. . . . The incidental complications are far too many to detail, all well done. Mr. Welles gives a tremendous bravura performance, Miss Woodward is very good indeed, and Mr. Franciosa has one or two scenes of remarkable power. But then we come to that ending, which wraps everything up by simply showing us that (after an episode of violence) the sensitive Clara suddenly begins to like the brash Ben and the old man suddenly decides to approve of Jody. It won't do; characters are not radically altered by momentary events. But who are you and I to object, when the vast, unthinking, sentimental, profitable audience is happy to believe they are?

This time it has been difficult; until *The Long, Hot Summer* was press-shown, very late and at short notice, I'd found nothing among the week's five that I was much inclined to write about. The only one I would mention now is *Mort en Fraude*, or *Fugitive in Saigon* (Director: Marcel Camus). This has the bones of quite a good film, but it is confusing and hard to get the hang of. There are the familiar pursuit-story situations, the mysterious figures who appear with looks of vague menace, the silent enigmatic stares, the desperate running through patches of local colour at night; there are Daniel Gélin as a young Frenchman involved against his will in currency smuggling, and Anh-Mécharde as a Eurasian girl who helps him. From the synopsis it appears that the point of the story is his heroic sacrifice in saving her village from being overrun and destroyed by war (the year is 1949), but will people who haven't read the synopsis grasp this? The Indo-Chinese detail is good and interesting, and isolated episodes use it well, but the episodes don't properly connect.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

The big news is Carol Reed's *The Key*; review next week. Nearly all the established ones of any interest in London seem to have gone, except Fellini's touching, funny *Cabiria* (16/4/58), the well-written, well-played but uneven *A Dangerous Age* (21/5/58), and *Around the World in Eighty Days* (17/7/57).

Two good releases: *Stage Struck* (28/5/58), which I found extremely enjoyable, and a pleasantly gay Western, *The Sheepman* (14/5/58).

RICHARD MALLETT



GILBERT HARDING

SIR GERALD KELLY

ON THE AIR

Sugared Ogre

I SUSPECT that the BBC have long been uncertain about the best way to use the talents of Mr. Gilbert Harding. Occasionally they seem to find they have him on their hands again, and before you know where you are he pops up in some unlikely enterprise such as the present one ("I Know What I Like"). To say the least, this is a waste of a cantankerous old party. The programme is an agreeable enough miscellany, a kind of well-bred variety show in which almost anything and anybody is liable to appear, without causing either surprise or excitement. The excuse (and I don't believe any excuse is necessary, for this is a legitimate and acceptable form of entertainment) is that Mr. Harding is supposed to be treating us to a few of his favourite turns, demonstrating a few of his likes and prejudices. All grumpiness forgot, he masquerades as a genial compère, smiling his curiously wistful smile, trotting out the odd long word (he indulges in sternly underlined polysyllabic excursions with as much pride and relish as a precocious sixth-former), and soothing us with his faded charm. Nostalgia swirls about him: his sighs and shrugs mourn for the elegant past he would like to have known: there is about him, in this mood, an aura that suggests the keening heartbreak of the Elgar 'cello Concerto.

But this is the warhorse on a leash. Surely the way to get the best value out of Harding is to plunge him white-hot into some free-for-all debate, where he can hiss and fume and lash about regardless, displaying the breadth of his very considerable mind, being his forthright, witty self, and not giving a tinker's dam for anyone. The excitement of this man, for viewers, comes not from what he likes but from the things he can't a-bear. He was the first person to be given full rein by the BBC, and he galumphed

about gloriously at times: don't let's have him chained up on his best behaviour for too long.

In "You Are There" (BBC) you are there all right—but you tend to be just a little *too* close, as I understand the programme's terms of reference. Here we have world-shaking events of the past being investigated and reported as they might be by reporters of to-day. It's an amusing game—but the rules are flagrantly broken. After an interview with some leading figure in the crisis, the interviewer properly retires: but the TV camera impudently (and without explanation) remains, so that we see and hear events at which no reporter could ever hope to be present. Thus the illusion is broken, and the programme falls between two stools: half a mock TV on-the-spot report, and half a dramatization of what *probably* happened. I'm sure Dimpleby would melt with discomfort before our very eyes if that kind of thing went on in "Panorama."

Sir Gerald Kelly may be an authority, but he does not strike me as being an ideal lecturer on art. Rather an enthusiast. Nor was he helped, in his gossipy attempt to transmit his worship of Velasquez (BBC), by the stubborn determination of the image on all television screens to remain in black-and-white. Still, I would like him to go on telling us about what to look for in a picture—with a little more technicality and a little less oh-so-naughty Edwardian chatter. A script might help. Being casual and unafraid before the camera is not enough.

I am glad that "The Farming Year" (ITV) is being sent out again, this time for grown-ups—and I hope no grown-up feels too sophisticated to watch it. As a matter of fact some of the Schools programmes (on both channels) are so well done that they should be slipped into the evening programmes more often. In the middle of such childish adult fantasies as "The Bob Cummings Show," for instance.

HENRY TURTON

Introducing

A. J. WENTWORTH, B.A. (Retd.)

A Typical Day in the Village

By H. F. ELLIS

It is now a good many years since my friend A. J. Wentworth, B.A., labouring under a sense of grievance, allowed me to publish some account of his experiences as a schoolmaster at Burgrove. His intention at that time was to defend himself against ill-natured gossip arising from an incident in which he threw an Algebra book, not of great weight, at one of his boys.

The attempt was not altogether successful. In the intervening years, Mr. Wentworth tells me, he has received a number of letters—some abusive, some contemptuous, some even from Americans—which clearly show that his character and outlook on life ("my philosophy of living" is his own phrase) have been widely misunderstood. In particular he resents the suggestion, made by several correspondents, that he is just a "typical narrow-minded schoolmaster," with no ideas or interests beyond time-tables, square brackets and Matron.

Now in retirement, "A.J.," as he allows me to call him, feels it his duty, if only in fairness to his profession, to counter these damaging misconceptions. "I make no explicit defence or apologia," he finely writes. "It appears to me that a simple, straightforward account of my life, as I live it in retirement from day to day, should suffice to show that, for variety and breadth of interests, civic sense, tolerance and a readiness to meet and mingle with all sorts and conditions of men and (up to a point of course) women, a retired schoolmaster can hold a candle to any Tom, Dick or Harry, be he clergyman, stockbroker, peer of the realm or even a so-called "executive" like Sidney Megrim—Megrim, eh?—whose dog continues to foul the footpath outside my house despite my utmost endeavours."

So he has sent me a great mass of personal jottings, extracts from diaries, letters, photographs, cuttings from local papers, theatre-ticket stubs, travel literature and (for some reason) a bulb catalogue with "Narrow-minded, my foot!" scrawled across it. "Do what you like with these," he instructs me, "as long as you give a fair picture of my life and philosophy of living, both here at Fenport and on my, I think I may claim, fairly extensive travels." All these documents arrived wrapped up in a copy of the Fenport and West Acre Advertiser containing a red-ringed report of Mr. Wentworth's acquittal on a charge of driving a motor-mower without due care and in a manner whereby a breach of the peace might have been occasioned.

I have done my best to carry out Mr. Wentworth's instructions. But I am not entirely sure that he has been well advised.

A YOUNG fellow called at my cottage this morning to ask whether I would care to become a Vice-President of the Fenport Football Club. Monday is the day on which Mrs. Bretton takes my laundry home with her and, of course, I was expecting nothing of the kind.

"Come in, come in," I said. "There's nothing else that I know of, Mrs. Bretton, thank you. I put it all together in the bathroom."

My visitor said he was Ernie Craddock from the garage and happened to be passing. I am old enough to remember the days when he would just have stood there, twisting his cap about awkwardly in his hands—not Craddock of course, but a much older man of the same age—and saying nothing. But times have changed. "Wash day, eh?" he said. "Shan't keep you a tick, though. The thing being, what about you as a Vice-Pre of the club?"

I said, when I understood what it was that he was trying to say, that it was a great honour to be asked and one that I greatly appreciated. "What would my duties be exactly?" I asked, and he told me that I should not have to do anything actually. "It's just the subscription, see," he explained.

"I see," I said. "Well, I shall have to think it over—Yes, Mrs. Bretton? What is it now?"

She is an excellent creature in many ways, and cooks my lunch and so on except on Sundays when her husband



is at home, but she does not understand that there are times when one does *not* wish to be bothered with household matters.

"No, not those," I said, to be rid of her. "The thin blue stripe this week please. I was never a great footballer, I fear, Mr. Craddock," I went on, "so that if there were any question of taking an active——"

"No refereeing, eh? Is that it?" he cried, breaking out into loud laughter, in which I confess I did not join. I suppose he intended a reference to a trivial incident that occurred towards the end of the cricket season, when I was unexpectedly asked to umpire a local match. The whole thing has been ridiculously exaggerated. It is nonsense to say that I deliberately tripped up one of the Fenport batsmen in the middle of the pitch and then gave him out. I have umpired hundreds of games at Burgrove Preparatory School in my time, including one or two First Eleven fixtures when Rawlinson was away, and such a thing had never happened before. I had a perfect right to cross over from one side of the pitch to the other, as soon as I noticed that a left-hander had arrived at my end—indeed it was my duty so to do.

"The bowler was entirely to blame, Mr. Craddock," I said with some warmth, when he had had his laugh out. "He had no business to deliver the ball without first ascertaining that I, as umpire, was in a position to adjudicate if called upon to do so—as in fact I was."

"The bowler, eh?" he repeated, breaking out afresh. People often laugh a great deal, I have noticed, when they are getting the worst of an argument.

"Certainly," I said. I had no doubt in my own mind that the bowler was to blame. The result of his precipitancy was that in crossing the pitch I inadvertently collided with the batsman, who was running a leg-bye, and to add to the confusion he, in falling, made an involuntary sweeping movement with his bat and brought down the batsman from the other end. Meanwhile the stumps had been thrown down and, on appeal from the wicket-keeper, I had no option but to give the decision "Run out." Even, as I explained later to the Fenport captain, had I been in any way to blame, there is no provision in the Laws for "Obstruction of the striker," whether by an umpire or anyone else.



"But darling—you know we always go to see 'The Mousetrap' on the first Wednesday in the month."

"I thought I should have died," Craddock said, beating his hands against his knees in a rather affected way. "The three of you lying there, and you on your back with your finger up calling 'Out!' 'OUT!' says you. 'Out? Who's out?' says somebody. 'Both of 'em?' And then, on top o' the lot——"

I enjoy a good joke as well as any man, but I fail to see the humour in what was, after all, a straightforward cricketer's dilemma. It is true that, on being asked amid some laughter which of the two batsmen I had given out, I declined to give a ruling; but my difficulty was that both of them—indeed all three of us—lay at a point roughly equidistant from the two wickets, and I was unable without reference to *Wisden* to say how the Law stood. I therefore, rightly I think, referred the matter to my colleague at the bowler's end, who called very belatedly "No ball!" and ordered the game to proceed—a highly improper decision, in my opinion. Be that as it may, no one has a right to criticize my own handling of the incident who has not himself been faced with a similar situation on the cricket field—at short notice too.

I was endeavouring to point this out to Craddock, and growing a little heated at his continued silly laughter, when Mrs. Bretton, perhaps fortunately, came down again to say that she had found my spectacles in "the upstairs place" as she prefers to call it.

"I have my reading glasses here, thank you, Mrs. Bretton," I said, taking them out of my pocket.

"These'll be the others then—for

looking out the window and that," she replied. "Though what you'd be wanting with them in the upstairs——"

"Never mind that now," I said sharply. "Just leave them on the table, please." I have no wish to hurt her feelings, but I really do not feel that I can enter into long discussions about where and why I have left this, that or the other thing. I had enough of that at Burgrove, towards the end.

Craddock took himself off soon afterwards, remarking that a guinea was the usual thing and adding that he had had "a wonderful time"—a glib phrase, meaningless in the circumstances, which I suppose he has picked up from his betters or the wireless or somewhere. I saw him to the gate and was just too late to shout at Sidney Megrim's infernal terrier. He pays no attention whatever to the byelaws relating to footpaths, and I shall really have to speak to him about it. To Megrim, that is to say. It is useless to speak to the dog.

When I had dealt with that it was time to go down to the village for tobacco, and with one thing and another my *Telegraph* crossword had to be left till after lunch. Not that it matters, in a way. I am no stickler for a rigid routine, I am thankful to say. It is just that one likes to have the afternoon free for other things.

* * * * *

A letter from Gilbert, who will be following me into retirement in another five years or so I suppose, set me thinking about the old days after tea. Or rather, set me thinking after tea

about the old days. One likes to be accurate—I have my mathematical training to thank for that—without being too fussy, and as a matter of fact it was after breakfast I happened to be thinking about. This being Monday the Stationery Cupboard should have been open between 9 and 9.30 a.m., and I could not help worrying. Gilbert has had a lot of experience, of course; he knows about the pink blotting-paper for Common Room use only, naturally. But experience isn't everything, now that he has taken over full responsibility. One has to be pretty firm at times, with a lot of boys clamouring round for pens and rubber and so on, to which very often they have no right. For want of a nail, they say, the battle was lost, and the same thing applies, up to a point, to nibs and Common Entrance. Of course, it is none of my business now, and nobody I dare say is indispensable, difficult though it may be at first for my colleagues to realize it. "We struggle along as best we can," Gilbert kindly writes, "without you."

It is a relief, in a way, to be free of the worries and anxieties of a senior master at a preparatory school, but life without responsibility and duties, as I told them all at the Presentation, is an empty thing. ("As empty as a swimming bath without any water in it," I could not resist adding, a reference which they greatly appreciated to the time when, through an absurd misunderstanding, I opened the waste-pipe on the morning of the School Diving Competition. A joke against oneself

helps to relieve the tension, I have often found, even on a serious occasion; though my heart was heavy enough, naturally, as I stood there with my right hand resting on the mahogany bureau subscribed for by many old Burgrovians, as well as past and present colleagues.) "I hope," I said to them, when the laughter had died down, "that I shall find no less useful work to do at my new home in Hampshire." This, for some reason, started the younger boys laughing again—through over-excitement, I think.

I certainly intend to take as full a part in the life of the village as my reading and other tasks and interests allow. But these things take time. One cannot become a churchwarden overnight. I should have thought that any fool would understand that. I thought so at least until this evening, when I sauntered down to the post office to get my reply off to Gilbert.

I was standing quietly at the stamp counter, waiting until the sub-post-mistress had finished selling a pair of canvas shoes, when quite by chance I happened to overhear a conversation between two men at the far end of the shop, one of whom I recognized by his voice to be Mellish from the chemist's.

"Who's that little old chap went up street just now, then?" the other man asked.

"Struts along?" Mellish asked. "Shortish, and looks over the top of his specs? Name of Wentworth. Elm Cottage. Didn't you hear?"

The other man said no, and Mellish

then gave a very inaccurate and one-sided account of the umpiring incident to which I have already briefly referred. I had half a mind to go across at once and point out the fact (which Mellish had deliberately omitted) that it was the bowler who had been to blame. It would have served Mellish right to be made to look foolish in public. But, to tell the truth, I am sick and tired of the silly business, and besides that I strongly object to eavesdropping in any shape or form. I should have made my way out of the shop, had there been any way of doing so unobserved. As it was, I was forced to remain and listen to the rest of the conversation, distasteful as it was.

"What is 'e, then, when he's not playing the giddy-goat?" the second man asked. "What's 'e do?"

"Do?" Mellish said. "Nothing."

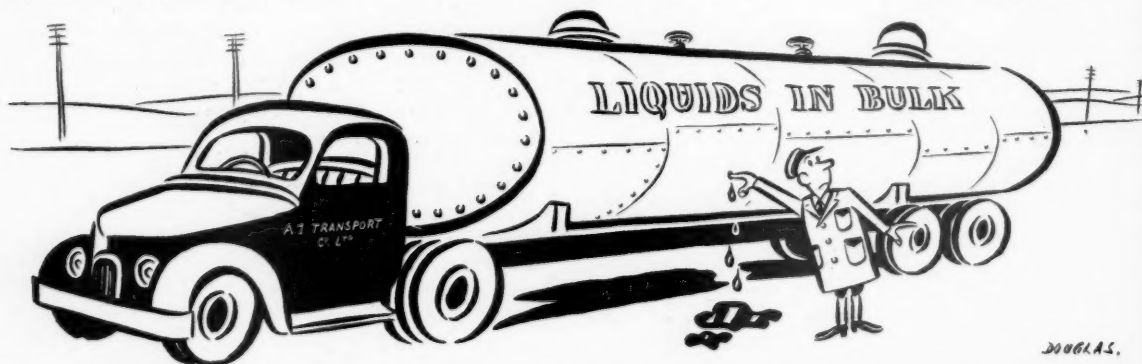
"How's he manage that, then?"

"Easy," Mellish said. "Starts right in at it after breakfast, so I'm told, and keeps on without a break till bedtime. A proper gentleman, old Mother Bretton calls him."

"I should like a threepenny stamp at once, please, Mrs. Enticott," I said loudly. "I am in rather a hurry, as I have a great deal to do."

I propose to leave the matter there. At my age one has learnt to treat idle, ill-informed gossip with the contempt it deserves. All the same, I shall be surprised if Mellish does not take a very different view of my character before the year is out.

Next week: A Misunderstanding at the Greengrocer's



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Reg'd at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper. Entered as 2nd-class Mail Matter at the New York, N.Y., P.O., 1903. Postage of this issue: Gt. Britain and Eire 2½d.; Canada 1d.* Elsewhere Overseas 3½d.† Mark Wrapper top left-hand corner "Canadian Magazine Post" † Printed Papers—Reduced Rate.

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Great Britain and Eire £2.10.0; Canada (by Canadian Magazine Post) £2.10.0 (\$7.25); Elsewhere Overseas £3.0.0 (U.S.A. \$9.00). U.S.A. and Canadian readers may remit by cheques on their own Banks. Other Overseas readers should consult their Bankers or remit by Postal Money Order. For prompt service please send orders by Air Mail to PUNCH, 10 Boulevard Street, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4, England.

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